

THE EARLY
PALAEOLOGAN RENAISSANCE
(1261 - c.1360)

THE
MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN
PEOPLES, ECONOMIES AND CULTURES, 400-1453

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THE EARLY PALAEOLOGAN RENAISSANCE (1261 - c.1360)

BY

EDMUND FRYDE



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Professor E. B. Fryde

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Edmund Boleslaw Fryde came to England from Warsaw in 1938 at the age of fifteen. After graduating at Oxford he was steered into medieval history as a field of research by his tutor, Goronwy Edwards. His early publications were in this field. In 1947 he was appointed to lecture in economic history in the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth. After some years, opportunities arose to broaden his teaching. This gave Fryde the chance to develop his interest in the Italian Renaissance and Italian art, and led him to Italy itself, where he subsequently spent many summers. He was moving towards what he came to realize were his true interests, though he never abandoned the earlier ones. For a while he contemplated writing a biography of Lorenzo de' Medici, but, as he came to realize the importance of the little used inventory by Vigili of the Greek manuscripts of the Medici, he abandoned the biography and embarked on a study of the manuscripts which resulted in the two-volume work published in 1996 as *Greek manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510*. This study led Fryde deeply into matters of textual transmission and engendered in him a warm affection for some of the Byzantine scholars he had come to know, at a great remove. As a sort of tribute, and to satisfy his roused curiosity about various questions, he felt impelled to write the present book. It is a one whose preparation gave him more pleasure than any other. Its last chapter was to have been the bridge to his next work, *The Reappearance of a Sense of History in the early Italian Renaissance*, a book of which a good part had been written when he died in November 1999. This last book was going to study the growth of historical awareness among artists, architects and writers, as well as scholars and historians.

Sadly, the author did not live to see the present book through the press. That duty fell to others. A *festschrift* for Edmund Fryde was published in 1996: *Recognitions: Essays presented to Edmund Fryde*, ed. Colin Richmond and Isobel Harvey (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, on behalf of the subscribers, 1996). The *festschrift* includes an appreciation, reprinted on pp. ix–xv of the present volume, and a bibliography of his writing.

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EDMUND FRYDE: AN APPRECIATION

Daniel Huws

In the early 1960s, when I first came to Aberystwyth, two people I noticed on the streets of the town struck me, in their different ways, as belonging to an obvious nobility of the intellect, fitting adornment for a university. Years passed before I came to know either of them. One turned out to be the Welsh master (a very distinguished one) at the grammar school. The other, patently foreign, a good chess-player one could be sure, wearing a beret and an old raincoat, carrying a shopping-bag, walking with something of the gait of a bear, was Edmund Fryde. Long afterwards I learnt that he had in his young days been accustomed to wear a hat. But the wind had one day blown it into the sea, and ever after he had stuck to a beret.

Aberystwyth is a university town, but few would call it cosmopolitan. Edmund Fryde has for nearly half a century been one of its distinctive presences, loved and admired by a wide variety of people, an infuriating presence to some, always his own man and irredeemably exotic. His background, very un-Welsh, very un-British, had shaped him long before his first encounter with British ways in an English public school.

Both Edmund's parents spent their youth in Czestochowa, at that time a Russian city of some 100,000 inhabitants, on the border with Germany and Austria-Hungary; its citizens could cross to those countries with no more than a frontier-pass. It was a city with a highly developed cultural life, especially in music (Artur Rubinstein was a contemporary there), indeed, a cosmopolitan one. Edmund's mother's family made annual visits to either Vienna or Breslau.

Edmund's father's maternal grandfather, called Bursztynski, had been the official representative of the Jewish community in south-eastern Poland, and the first Jew allowed to settle in Czestochowa, in 1829. His son became a famous doctor. His grandsons emigrated to Russia and became distinguished civil servants. His daughter however, at the age of sixteen, married a forty-nine year old bachelor, Henryk Fryde, Edmund's grandfather. Henryk Fryde had owned a village called Kraszewice, near Czestochowa, and had lived more in

the style of a Polish landlord than a Jew. He sold his village and moved to Czestochowa in 1903, when Edmund's father was ten. Mieczyslaw Fryde, Edmund's father (later, when he settled in the USA after the Second World War, known as Matthew Fryde), a gifted mathematician, was a student in Berlin in 1912–14. He joined the Russian Social Democratic Party while in Berlin, and at the outbreak of war he fled. In 1915 he returned to Czestochowa, where he became leader of the party. He later became leader in Warsaw and Lodz, organising sabotage of German war factories. The connections made during these years in the revolutionary socialist underground were to prove very helpful when Mieczyslaw Fryde became a lawyer; after 1919 many wartime revolutionaries found themselves in Polish government posts.

Mieczyslaw Fryde became a Privat-Dozent in mathematics at Warsaw University, but in 1923 came to realize that he could not, as a Jew without a powerful patron, expect to advance in a university career in the subject of his first love. He turned to law, which he had already studied, and success quickly came his way. By 1928 he was a legal adviser to the Polish Ministry of Finance; in 1936 he became one of the legal advisers to the Foreign Office. (Had it not been for the diplomatic passport which he thus acquired, he and his family, returning from a holiday in France, would not have been readmitted to Britain on 29 August 1939). Even before beginning to practise law, Mieczyslaw Fryde's interests had extended to economics and history. During the 1920s and 1930s he published widely on statistics and medieval economic history, as well as on legal subjects. After 1948, settling in the USA, it was to the academic world that he turned. At Columbia and Yeshiva Universities he taught economics, history and the history of economics and science. During and immediately after the war he held posts in the office of the Polish Prime Minister in Exile and in the Inter-Allied Commission on War Crimes. Intellectually, Edmund owes his father much. Father was, by all accounts, like son, an irrepressible sharer of knowledge. The chapter contributed jointly by father and son to volume III of *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, described in a review by Yves Renouard as 'a classic of the economic and financial history of the medieval West', is a monument to a shared interest.

Edmund's mother, Sarah Louise Rosenzweig (who died in 1942), contributed at a deeper level to his development. Her father, Nathan Rosenzweig, a timber merchant, was rich. The home was cultured

and politically radical. The two eldest brothers were recruited into the Social Democratic Party in 1915, betrayed, and imprisoned by the Germans from 1916 to 1918. Like Edmund's mother, they remained radical, even idealistic, in the increasingly reactionary Poland of the inter-war years, when radicalism had to become covert. Edward, the eldest, was a distinguished chemist, inventor of bakelite. Few of the large Rosenzweig family survived the Second World War.

Sarah Rosenzweig had run away from home in 1911 in order to study Polish literature at Krakow University. She was a pretty and vivacious woman, passionately fond of art. She encouraged Edmund, her only child, to read widely in Polish literature, both prose and poetry. She arranged for him to be taught French and German, and later English. When he came to school in England at the age of fifteen he could read French and English with fair fluency, German less well. He had been taught the piano and, for many years, used to play with pleasure, Bach in particular. His early introduction by his mother to picture galleries and museums was to bear fruit in his teaching in later years. In the company of his mother, who loved to travel, Edmund began to get to know Europe.

Edmund was born in 1923. In 1932 he went to the Mikolaj Rej Gymnasium, one of the best Warsaw schools. He was, he says, no more than an average pupil, not being pushed by his parents. Among a number of excellent teachers were the history master, Edward Bartel, and the classics master. Edmund enjoyed his Latin and Greek and acquired a lifelong taste for Greek literature, another early sowing which was to come late into fruit. Above all, Edmund spent his schooldays reading. He was encouraged by his father, who had six thousand books, to make free of the library. Edmund remembers beginning to use it when he was about eleven. His father would discuss books, but would never direct his sons's reading. Edmund recalls using the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Macaulay's *History of England* was there in five volumes in Polish translation. The first author Edmund remembers reading in English was Oscar Wilde.

In 1938 Edmund was sent to Bradfield College. He found Bradfield, unlike Polish schools, not at all anti-semitic; it taught him to speak and to write English; and it had a good library. Otherwise he did not find it stimulating. In January 1942 he went up to abnormal, wartime Oxford, to Balliol College. He recalls the particular kindness of J. M. Thompson, his tutor for one term, a sympathetic and imaginative man. Sitting his final examinations in June 1944 and

unable to take his degree until December, Edmund began research. His degree, in history, was a good second. It was Goronwy Edwards, who had been Edmund's tutor for one term, who encouraged him to start research, on a subject which was central to his own interests, "Edward III's war finances, 1337-41". In doing so, he made a medievalist of Edmund. Edmund has also said that it was Goronwy Edwards who taught him to write clear scholarly English. With the help of a Polish Government research scholarship and, initially, support from his father, Edmund was able to continue his research until 1947. On 31 July that year he was both awarded his doctorate and appointed to a lectureship in Economic History at the University College of Wales. Professor R. F. Treharne, judging by the title of Edmund's thesis, was under the false impression that he had appointed an economic historian. Edmund did in fact make an economic historian of himself, partly because he was until 1967 obliged to lecture on the subject, and partly because he had been invited by Professor Postan to contribute the chapter on medieval public credit to the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe* and embarked on extensive research in the public records. Unlikely though it might have seemed at the time, Aberystwyth was to become Edmund's home for life. The milestones of his subsequent academic career can be listed simply. He was appointed full Lecturer in 1950, Senior Lecturer in 1960, Reader in 1969, and given a personal chair in 1973. In 1988 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

A number of articles on medieval financial and commercial history also arose from the prolonged research in the Public Record Office. The earliest of his articles on which Edmund still looks kindly is "Deposits of Hugh Despenser the Younger with Italian bankers" (1951) an article which owed its origin to the kindness of Roger Ellis in offering transcripts he had made of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian documents in the PRO. These years of intensive research among archives gave Edmund a formidable mastery of the *fonds*, and of palaeography and diplomatic. Indeed, in 1955 he came within a shade of being appointed Reader in Diplomatic at Oxford. He became well acquainted with a famous generation of Public Record Office staff. He has affectionate memories of H. C. Johnson; C. A. F. Meekings became a friend for life. The greatest influence on Edmund in this period was, however, another habitué of the Record Office, Professor V. H. Galbraith. Something of his radical outlook and irreverent spirit is perpetuated in Edmund's views on

medieval society. It was through Professor Galbraith that Edmund came to know Professor May McKisack, later a source of much help and friendship.

The material of Edmund's doctoral thesis appeared in a number of articles during the 1950s and 1960s. His intimate knowledge of the affairs of Edward III's financiers had not endeared them to him, though it did provide him with some exemplary comparisons with political and public figures of our own age. One character, however, kept intruding on Edmund's research, in more than one field—in connection with his thesis, in connection with the Medici Bank, in connection with the discontent of peasants. The unsavoury William de la Pole could only be exorcised by a biography, *William de la Pole, Merchant and King's Banker, d. 1366*, which was published in 1988.

In 1954 Sir Maurice Powicke invited Edmund to help with the second edition of the *Handbook of British Chronology*, a labour for which his familiarity with the Public Records had equipped him well. Although he failed to overcome Sir Maurice's timidity with respect to that edition. ("The Queen is our patron"), it is a matter of pride to Edmund that it was he, a Polish Jew, who made sure that in the third edition (1986) the officials of the Commonwealth period were included in the Royal Historical Society's *Handbook*, expertly listed by Gerald Aylmer. Work on the *Handbook* extended Edmund's interests to new areas of British medieval history; in particular, as a result of revising the lists of medieval parliaments, to constitutional history. One result was the edition, with Edward Miller, of selected articles on the history of Parliament (1970). It was while working on the *Handbook* that Edmund edited, as a volume to be presented to Sir Goronwy Edwards, the *Book of Prests of the King's Wardrobe 1294-5* (1962), an edition of the financial and military records of Edward I's campaign to quell the last major Welsh rebellion against him. This volume was to be Edmund's only large incursion into Welsh history; he has regretted the lack of opportunities to make others.

In 1959 Edmund began to teach as a special subject "English history 1485-1558 and its European background". This led him to learn Italian much more thoroughly and to start making regular visits to Italy, often twice a year. These visits intensified his interest in Italian art and kindled a desire to teach some art history. When Professor Treharne retired in 1966, to be succeeded by Fergus Johnston, the way opened. Edmund at first lectured on Italian art from Roman times up to 1700; later, on European and British art

also. These lectures continued until his retirement in 1990. They were accompanied by slides drawn from a lovingly accumulated stock which included many made from Edmund's own photographs. No lectures ever gave him greater pleasure, and few, probably, gave greater enjoyment to others. Although the subject lay close to his heart, Edmund always maintained that he was too much of an amateur, too lacking in technical expertise, to publish anything ambitious in this field. An article on Lorenzo de' Medici's artistic patronage was the closest he came.

The stimulus for another large research undertaking came in 1969, when Edward Miller invited Edmund to write a chapter on 'Peasant rebellion and peasant discontents' for the *Cambridge Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. III, 1348–1500. Edmund began to think in terms of an expanded book-length treatment of the subject, but the long delay in the appearance of the Cambridge volume (it was published in 1991) meant that the larger treatment had to bide its time. *Peasants and Landlords in Later Medieval England c. 1380–c. 1525* will appear in 1996.

In the same year, 1969, Edmund accepted another invitation, to write an article on 'Historiography and historical methodology', for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. This had profounder consequences. He no longer regards the article with pleasure, but in writing it he came to discover an interest which lay deeper than any others, in the history of Western civilisation and learning. He began to lecture on historiography and, spurred also by another invitation, of his friend A. G. Dickens, to write an article about Lorenzo de' Medici and his patronage, he immersed himself in research on the intellectual life of Renaissance Italy. At one point, still thinking on old lines, he thought of writing a biography of Lorenzo. But the biography was abandoned, and Lorenzo's library came centre stage. Edmund was drawn into addictive pursuit of the transmission of texts and identification of manuscripts. The bibliography of Edmund's writings provides evidence enough of the new direction of interest. Running as a thread through a series of articles is his detailed knowledge of Lorenzo's books. The devotedly reconstructed collection of Lorenzo's Greek books is the subject of *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510*, which will also appear during 1996. Edmund's material on the Latin manuscripts meanwhile lies dormant.

Edmund's Medicean and humanistic interests led to a friendship with Arnaldo Momigliano, a person to whom he has come to feel

he owes a deeper debt than to any other scholar. Edmund is thankful in his latter years to find himself reading the work of, or reading about, those who sustained civilised values, rather than uncovering the misdeeds of medieval tycoons. He is full of eagerness as he begins to work on a book on the Byzantine scholarly renaissance of 1261–c. 1350, and on preparing another volume of essays on humanistic studies and Renaissance historiography.

Edmund maintains that when he began to lecture at Aberystwyth he was a very diffident performer. It was J. Killa Williams of the French Department who convinced him that the good teacher had positively to enjoy lecturing, and to free himself from notes. Edmund certainly came to enjoy lecturing. He was no doubt helped by having an extraordinarily retentive memory and an integrative cast of mind. Edmund would not deny having cultivated a style. Even those familiar only with his conversation will be aware of his mastery of the rounded anecdote or digression. Which of his two passions, teaching and research, used to give Edmund the greater pleasure, it would be hard to say. Lecturing apart, he could be unstinting in the help and encouragement he would give to the many students, both undergraduates and post-graduate, who responded to his interest.

Edmund's marriage in 1966 to Natalie Davies, one of his former students, was followed by a period of fruitful collaboration, her flair given scope by his guidance. Personally, the marriage was not successful, and ended in 1981. Natalie Fryde, by then an assured medieval historian, went her own way.

Friendship is something Edmund values highly. He is not shy of making known his categorical likes and dislikes. In his early years in Aberystwyth he made good friends in the College, then more Welsh than now, but like many Jews he felt a suspicion of all manifestations of nationalism. He was sometimes thought to be 'anti-Welsh'. By the 1980s his circle of friendship in Aberystwyth was spread well outside the College and was probably more Welsh in bias than it had been. But it is unlikely that even Edmund could have foretold the day when after a stormy meeting of the College Court of Governors, during which he had spoken in characteristically blunt manner in defence of civilised values, he was congratulated by none other than Gwynfor Evans for being "more Welsh than the Welsh". The remark pleased Edmund, if only because it gave such amusement to so many of his friends.

PREFACE

The contents and arrangement of this book require a brief explanation. It is concerned chiefly with the century after the recapture in 1261 of Constantinople by the Byzantines. However, three early chapters (2–4) deal with an earlier period of Byzantine history as an essential introduction to what followed after 1261. The concluding chapter (20) attempts a comparison between Byzantium and the Italian Renaissance of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as a way of explaining some special features of Byzantine culture and learning.

The texts of each chapter are followed by lists of the principal sources on which the respective chapters are based. The footnotes largely refer to those references.

In the course of my research and writing extending over several years I have received an immense amount of help and encouragement from numerous friends. Meredydd Evans, Elin and Martin Fitzpatrick, Daniel Huws, V. C. Mavron and Maldwyn Mills read portions of this book and helped to improve it. They also provided me with some of my sources, as did David Davies of University College, London, Eluned Evans, Isobel Harvey, Philip Jones of Brasenose College and N. G. Wilson of Lincoln College, Oxford. I received a vast amount of help from the staff of the National Library at Aberystwyth, particularly from Linda Davies, Daniel Huws, Jean Jones and Richard Lewis. I am very grateful to them all, as I am to Mrs Dorothy Evans for typing this book.

EDMUND FRYDE

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bandini, *Cat. gr.*: A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae* (3 vols., Florence, Introduction 1757, text 1764–70).

Bol.Com.Ed.Naz.: *Bolletino del Comitato per la Preparazione dell'Edizione Nazionale dei Classici Greci e Latini*.

Com.A.G.: *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* (Berlin, 1883–1907).

Pauly's R. E.: *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.

V.gr.: *Vigili graecus* (c. 1508), [Fabio Vigili's Greek inventory], ms.Vat. Barberinus latinus 3185.

Abbreviations used in references to manuscripts will be self-explanatory on consulting the *Index of Manuscripts* on pp. 407–08.

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Mosaics

- 1a-1b. Theodore Metochites offering the church of Chora to Christ
- 2a-2b. Christ Pantocrator
 - 3a. St. Peter
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- 4a-i *Scenes from the life of the Virgin*
- 4a-4b. The Birth of the Virgin
- 4c-4d. The Enrolment for Taxation
 - 4e. The Annunciation at the Well
- 4f-4g. Flight to Egypt
- 4h-4i. The Dormition (death) of the Virgin
- 5a-5b. The Temptation of Christ
 - 6. The Peacock (decorative mosaic)

Frescoes

- 7a. A traditional Virgin
- 7b. A loving Virgin (art of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries)
- 8. The Angel rolling the Scroll of Heaven
- 9a-9b. The Anastasis (Christ rescuing Adam and Eve)

(The Plates can be found between pages 330 and 331.)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I

The nearest predecessor of this book is the graceful little volume by Sir Steven Runciman on the *Last Byzantine Renaissance* (London, 1970). My treatment is much more detailed, including a discussion of the earlier background before the thirteenth century. Also I frequently use unpublished manuscripts, while Runciman relied on published sources.

Since he wrote, there have been numerous fresh publications. I wish to single out especially N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983) and P. Lemerle's exceptionally precise and judicious writings, as well as the summaries of the current state of knowledge by H. Hunger and the wise writings of I. Ševčenko, R. Browning and A. Kazhdan (cf. the references to this chapter).

I shall try later to justify my willingness to speak of Byzantine Renaissances. Two periods merit such a description: the Renaissance under the Macedonian dynasty in the ninth and tenth centuries and the Renaissance after 1261, which forms the main subject of this book.

This second Renaissance mainly originated after the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in that year (chapter 5). It had been conquered by the Latin Fourth Crusade in 1203–4 and for some years there was uncertainty whether the Byzantine Empire would survive. Ultimately a small but efficient Greek state was reconstituted in Western Asia Minor; and in 1261 its ruler, Michael VIII Palaiologos (1258–1282), was able to recapture Constantinople. His subsequent attempts to re-establish Byzantium as a major power failed, but he, and his heir, Andronikos II (1282–1328), managed to preserve the independence of a remnant of shrunken and impoverished territories, gradually restricted only to parts of mainland Greece and some adjoining islands (chapters 5–6, 9).

Andronikos and his entourage of well-educated high officials were munificent patrons of Hellenic learning. This was to some extent a

conscious reaction to their inability to stem the decline of the Byzantine state. They sought compensation for political disasters in reviving more deliberately than ever before the glories of the ancient Greek literary, philosophical and artistic culture. This was the only area where the Byzantine superiority over everyone else could still be confidently asserted. Some of the most distinguished men in the history of Byzantine classical learning and the arts were active in the reign of Andronikos II. The main subject of this book is the preservation and dissemination by this learned elite of such ancient Greek literature, philosophy and science as still survived at that time. We still have almost all of what they preserved, including many writings that until then had lingered in obscure places and might have been permanently lost without their scholarly enterprises.

II

There had been periods in earlier centuries when the preservation by Byzantines of the Hellenic literary legacy was under dire threat. The longest and most obscure of those periods were the seventh and most of the eighth centuries, which were a time of general breakdown in the antique features of Byzantine society and economy.¹ However, in the ninth, tenth and the first half of the eleventh centuries there ensued an astonishing renewal of the Byzantine state. This made possible what is often called the first (or Macedonian) Byzantine Renaissance² (chapters 2 and 3).

The central, scholarly feature of that Renaissance was the introduction of a new type of script. Instead of copying literary and learned texts in capital letters, scribes began to use a cursive script (normally used for private correspondence and business documents). The use of cursive saved greatly on space and it could be written much more rapidly. There was, therefore, a considerable saving on costs and the manuscripts thus written were much more easily understood. The surviving Greek literature began to be 'transliterated' into this new cursive minuscule script.

However, this change involved a considerable threat to the survival of parts of the Ancient Greek legacy. The number of scholars

¹ See especially the remarkable book of M. F. Hendy (1985), ref. 9.

² P. Lemerle (1971, French ed.), ref. 14. This is a critical survey of the evidence.

who could supervise this operation, and of skilled copyists controlled by them, was limited. Hence many authors were transliterated only once or, at best, very few times. This involved decisions about the choice of an author's version that might be copied, and alternative versions, often better, were ignored. There was a narrowing of textual traditions that were being preserved. Manuscripts that were not transliterated were likely to become neglected and might ultimately disappear altogether. Furthermore, only certain authors were transliterated, while less popular works risked being lost (see chapter 2).

Transliterations continued through the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. The Fourth Crusade was one of the worst disasters that ever befell Byzantine civilization (1203–4, chapter 3). Manuscripts were destroyed in the disastrous fires and in the sack of Constantinople. Libraries were dispersed. Some authors, known until 1204, disappeared thereafter for ever. Such *codices* as survived in territories ruled by the Latins were apt to be neglected and further losses followed. The recovery of Constantinople by the Byzantines in 1261 changed all that for the better.

The most concrete approach to the second Renaissance, which then started, is through biographies of the leading scholars. Maximos Planudes (1255–1305, chapters 8, 11, 12) was the most versatile and learned of them all. Almost equally important was Demetrios Triklinios, who may have been a pupil of Planudes, and he was the outstanding editor of the Athenian dramatists of the fifth century B.C. (chapters 8, 13). Two more conventional but prolific scholars and teachers were Manuel Moschopoulos, a pupil of Planudes, dead by *c.* 1316 (chapters 8, 14) and Thomas Magistros, whose earliest dated manuscript survives from 1301 and who was still alive in 1346 (chapters 8, 14). Theodore Metochites, the most influential imperial minister between 1305 and 1328, was a writer on astronomy, philosophy and literary subjects. He was that rare figure among the Byzantines, an author who caught authentic glimpses of some notables of the Ancient world and very early Byzantium (chapters 16–17). He was also a munificent artistic patron. The monastic church of Chora at Constantinople that he rebuilt and redecorated (*c.* 1315–21) is the finest Byzantine edifice surviving from that period. The painter of the magnificent *Anastasis* in it was one of the geniuses of Byzantine artistic history. My visit to Chora in September 1996 is one of my most memorable experiences.

Joseph the Philosopher (*c.* 1280–1330) was a friend of Metochites.

He was the author of an encyclopaedia of Byzantine learning. He declined to become patriarch of Constantinople and combined profound, traditional Byzantine piety with great erudition, both secular and religious (chapter 10). One of the glories of Byzantine literature was a tradition of fine historical writing about Byzantium. Some of the best historians expressed outspoken condemnations of the abuses of imperial absolutism and of the corruption rife in Byzantine government. This was true of Zonaras and Nikephoros Choniates in the twelfth century, both of them high imperial officials (chapter 3). The same tradition of independent criticism runs through the *Historia* of George Pachymeres (1242–c. 1308), an extremely well-informed official in the service of both the emperors and the patriarchs of Constantinople. He was one of the most distinguished historians as well as a scientist (chapters 10, 15, 17). From the third quarter of the fourteenth century came a unique work, an autobiographical ‘History’ covering the years 1321–57 by John Kantakuzenos, defending his record as the chief adviser of the emperor Andronikos III (1328–41) and of his own rule, conquered through a bitter civil war, as Emperor John VI (1347–54). It is written in pure Attic Greek, modelled on Thucydides, the greatest Athenian ancient historian (chapter 18).

III

Byzantine civilization has the reputation of being profoundly conservative and there is ample evidence for justifying that view. A number of leading modern historians of Byzantium regarded their task as consisting of stressing what they considered to be essential features that changed very little. They discussed elements of continuity rather than innovation.³ Certainly one cannot find in Byzantine literature the *notion* of originality. The Byzantines did not attach to it the importance that it has in our modern outlook.⁴ But the early Palaeologan Renaissance is one of the periods of Byzantine history where this is clearly too restrictive an approach to things that mattered. If one asks whether continuity or innovation was the pre-

³ A. Kazhdan and S. Franklin, “Approaches to the history of Byzantine civilization: from Krause to Beck and Mango” (1984), ref. 13. See also Kazhdan’s introduction (“Innovation in Byzantium”) to A. Littlewood (1975), ref. 15.

⁴ A. Cutler in Littlewood, *ibid.*, “Originality as a cultural phenomenon”, p. 203.

dominant feature of the culture in the period after 1261, the answer is that both co-existed then. But the innovations, though important, were within the boundaries of Byzantine traditions, though they tended to stretch these boundaries beyond customary limits.

Such literary texts as had been copied before 1261 mostly circulated in only very few exemplars. This changed spectacularly after 1261. New editions were produced in more expert ways, resulting in more complete and less corrupt texts. They were often accompanied by detailed commentaries, chiefly linguistic and grammatical. I shall mention later some other improvements.

The introduction of improved editions of more popular authors unavoidably caused neglect and loss of older manuscripts. But this can account for only some of the amazing disparity in the numbers of *codices* written before and after 1261. Today we have only two *codices* of the oldest surviving Athenian dramatist, Aeschylus, dating from before 1280, but we have now some 100 manuscripts of his tragedies, all, except those two, copied after that date, partly between 1280 and 1330. The picture is similar for Sophocles, active at Athens in the next generation. Two texts are in the same pre-1280 manuscripts as Aeschylus; and three others may predate the *codices* of Palaeologan scholars. In 1953 M. Wittek estimated that we know of some 190 Sophoclean *codices* produced in the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328) or descendants of the editions of that period. Of the known *codices* of Euripides, four antedate 1200, but at least 264 were copied after 1261. At most five of the manuscripts of Aristophanes, the greatest Athenian comic dramatist, preceded a new edition by Triklinios, but we have over 30 *codices* descended from the Triklinian recension. Of some 200 known manuscripts of Pindar (fifth century B.C.) over 60 are *codices* of a partial edition by Moschopoulos; 20 descend from an edition of the same poems by Triklinios; while 21 stem from an edition by Thomas Magistros (chapter 8).

An important achievement of some of the leading scholars consisted of attempts to produce complete editions of an author or to assemble comprehensive anthologies of particular types of writings. Some of the most famous collections thus created included rediscovery and edition of some of the more important works of ancient Greek literature. There were comparable rediscoveries and editions of outstanding philosophical and scientific works.

One important anthology of cognate literary works was assembled between 1280 and 1283 by Maximos Planudes. His partly autograph

Florentine ms.Laur.32.16 contains a selection of valuable Greek hexametric poetry. In chronological spread it ranges from Hesiod in the eighth century B.C., through the Hellenistic Alexandrian poets, and the pioneer Christian poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, to the vast of *Dionysiaka* of Nonnos (5th century A.D.), a storehouse of information about ancient pagan mythology. Nonnos is preserved nowhere else.

Planudes also tried to assemble complete editions of a single author. He did this for Plutarch, a historical biographer and a graceful essayist (c. 46–c. 126 A.D.), and Planudes probably preserved Plutarchian works which otherwise might have been lost. It was a magnificent textual achievement, ferreting out texts widely scattered through a multitude of sources (chapter 12).

Demetrios Triklinios successfully produced complete, or, at least, fuller editions, of the most important poets and dramatists (chapter 13). Out of the seven extant tragedies of Aeschylus we owe to him fairly complete versions of two (the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*). The *Agamemnon* is probably the most powerful and disturbing of all the Athenian dramas and human literature would be immeasurably poorer without it. A late edition of it, perhaps of c. 1330, is a Triklinian autograph.

Out of the extant 19 tragedies of Euripides, 9 were rediscovered by Triklinios and edited by him as part of the first complete edition of Euripides. They include some of the latest and most moving of his plays. Both Planudes and Triklinios were able to produce numerous emendations. Some were based on older, now lost manuscripts, but others came from their knowledge of Greek usage. They include emendations acceptable to modern editors.

In the eyes of Byzantine scholars ancient Greek science formed as vital a part of their heritage from Antiquity as did poetry, drama, or rhetorical writings. This was certainly so for Planudes, who edited mathematical and astronomical works, and for George Pachymeres, the foremost historian of his time, who was also a writer on philosophy and mathematics. But until the early Palaeologan Renaissance some branches of ancient Greek science had been neglected. This was particularly true of geography. Planudes set out to remedy this and brought back into circulation two of the largest and most important works (chapter 12). He rediscovered and edited the *Geography* of Ptolemy (second century A.D.). He also made an important contribution to the recovery of a good text of the work of Strabo (64/63

B.C.—after 20 A.D.) on the historical geography mainly of the lands of the Roman Empire. He may have rendered the same service to the preservation of the *Description of Greece* by Pausanias (second half of the second century A.D.).

The early Palaeologan Renaissance played an important part in the preservation of ancient Greek philosophy. Since the late eleventh century the works of Plato and of the Neoplatonists had been in considerable disfavour, as they were regarded by the leading Byzantine clergy as contrary to Christian teaching. The ruling Komnenian dynasty zealously enforced this conviction. By the second half of the thirteenth century this ban on them largely disappeared, especially as Andronikos II was a great admirer of Plato. We possess some 50 Platonic manuscripts copied in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Of the ones that can be precisely dated, at least 15 were copied in the century after 1261. The earliest complete *codex* of Plotinus, the Neoplatonist (3rd century A.D.), dates from the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Three of the commentaries of his follower, Proclus (5th century A.D.), on Platonic dialogues were copied by the historian and scientist George Pachymeres.

It may come as a surprise to many scholars to realize the contribution of the early Palaeologan Renaissance to our knowledge of Aristotle. Some 150 extant Aristotelian manuscripts were copied in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. What is most important of all, we owe some of the most valuable aids to the study of Aristotelian treatises to this period. Modern interpretation of Aristotle owes much to the partial reconstruction of the early Aristotelian dialogues. A number of these (especially the *Protreptikos* and *On the Ideas*) depend for their best texts on manuscripts of that period. The largest collection of commentaries on Aristotle is preserved in the immense Florentine ms.Laur.85.1 of 762 folio pages, written probably in the imperial palace under Andronikos II. Some form the origin of the entire tradition of their text, and the quality of the versions included in this volume is high. Our knowledge of the predecessors of Aristotle other than Plato rests, for the best texts, on the contents of this volume (the commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias of c. 200 A.D. on the first four books of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* and the commentary of Simplicius, written after 540 A.D., on the *Physics* of Aristotle). That last was a copy of a *codex* belonging to Gregory of Cyprus, patriarch of Constantinople in 1283–89. Even some writings which every Byzantine scholar publicly denounced, like a major part

of the work of the sceptical author Sextus Empiricus, first survive from this period (chapter 10).

I have included a chapter on translations from Greek into Latin, mainly in the second half of the thirteenth century. It deals chiefly with translations by William de Moerbeke. The bulk of his renderings were the writings of Aristotle and commentaries on them, though he also translated Neoplatonic writings and mathematical manuscripts of Archimedes. His versions give us information about the *codices* still surviving then in Byzantium. I have also assumed that in his choice of works that deserved translation, and of the best manuscripts, he may have received much advice from well-informed Byzantines. A study of his translations provides an indirect contribution to our knowledge of Byzantine philosophical scholarship (chapter 7).

IV

The rediscoveries of new texts, especially in literature, the production of new editions, the multiple copying of *codices* were all connected with what might be called Byzantine middle and higher education. Thus, considerable improvements in materials for education took place for maintaining and expanding one of the most conservative features of Byzantine civilization. This is one major reason why many modern scholars are reluctant to speak of the early Palaeologan *Renaissance* and prefer some less sweeping terms. I shall return to this problem.

The Byzantines inherited, and developed further, the systems created under the Roman Empire for educating in Greek the sons of the wealthy and leisured class (*paideia*).⁵ They continued to use the same textbooks or Byzantine commentaries on these manuals. The transfer in 324 A.D. of the capital of the Eastern part of the Empire to Constantinople made that city into the most important centre of this Greek *paideia* and, except during the rule of the Latin emperors there (1204–61), it retained this preeminence down to the Turkish conquest in 1453. The same type of instruction flourished also in other leading Greek cities. It was an education aimed at the teaching of ancient Attic Greek, unintelligible to the vast majority of mostly

⁵ The best account is by H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité* (new ed., Paris, 1965).

uneducated Byzantines. That dead language was taught through the mastering of extensive vocabulary and of correct grammar. These things could only be acquired from reading and memorizing a selection from the Greek literature of antiquity.

The ultimate aim was to equip a Byzantine elite in church and state for the exercise of an erudite and complicated rhetoric in writing and speaking. At its best it produced some elegant and learned discourses, but more commonly it resulted in obscurity and prolixity that enrage and bewilder modern students (chapters 9 and 11). We are also often repelled by the superficiality of much of this learning and of the rhetoric based on it. There was overmuch imitation of ancient models, without any real understanding of the ancient civilization which left those models to Byzantines.

To quote a speech before the emperor (probably Andronikos II) of Thomas Magistros, a prominent scholar and teacher from Thessalonica: for most people more advanced education was only accessible "if they had wealth and leisure".⁶ Superior education assured sufficient personnel for a large, predominantly secular, imperial administration. It also offered chances of preferment into the higher offices of the Byzantine church. The Byzantine elite of aristocrats and higher imperial officials was a very snobbish group. It was a peculiarity of the Byzantine society that for many of them the snobbery was sustained by this superior education. This contributed to their assurance, as did their wealth and power, that they had nothing in common with the great mass of ordinary people.

During the reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II there may have been an increase in the number of teachers of higher literacy and the consequent multiplication of schools and this "probably made higher literacy more widely accessible than it had been at any other time".⁷

We are sure that some of the most distinguished ancient Greek poetry, drama and oratory contain the greatest spiritual treasures of Western civilization. Did they mean anything comparable to the Byzantine scholars who preserved them for us and were making them more accessible to readers in their improved editions? This is one of the most fundamental questions that modern Byzantinists must

⁶ Cf. chapter 14.

⁷ R. Browning, *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Variorum Reprints, Northampton, 1989), p. 231.

pose. Also, perhaps there was a contrast here between the scholars of the Macedonian Renaissance and their successors after 1261.

In the ninth and tenth centuries scholars were interested above all in the recovery of the correct Greek language and were concerned with the form rather than the substance of literature. In chapter 2 I cite some very pessimistic conclusions of P. Lemerle about this. He is worth quoting here also:

It is not at all clear that the Byzantine Greeks of that society truly appreciated the beauty of Homer and Sophocles, Thucydides or Demosthenes. . . . The writings of Greece remained almost incomprehensible to them. . . . They did not seek out the spirit of them; everything seems to have been reduced to techniques . . . is ancient literature anything but a vast store of props at the service of a learned and complicated rhetoric?⁸

Language and style still remained of utmost importance to the scholars of the Palaeologan Renaissance. Late in his career, in 1299, Planudes inserted in a copy of a poetic rendering of the Gospel of St. John, probably by Nonnos (fifth century A.D.), a comment that

We should note that the reading of Hellenic literature has always been an object of longing and delight for lovers of learning, and particularly the reading of the poems of Homer because of the grace and variety of the language. That is why the present metrical paraphrase has been written in heroic metre to give pleasure to lovers of learning and literature.⁹

Only form is stressed, not content. Yet Planudes is one of the few scholars in whose activities one can detect some appreciation for deeper human values. I shall be arguing that his choice of Latin works for translation into Greek suggests this, such as Cicero's "Dream of Scipio", a choice of some of Ovid's finest poetry and the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. Triklinios appears to have appreciated the satirical humour of Aristophanes (chapters 12–13).

⁸ P. Lemerle, English ed. (1986), ref. 14, p. 352.

⁹ In Venetian ms. Marcianus.gr.481, cited by R. Browning, "Tradition and originality in literary criticism and scholarship" in A. R. Littlewood, ref. 15, p. 21.

V

Two concepts of fundamental importance, used by me, require defence. Is it legitimate to speak of the Byzantine Renaissances and of Byzantine Christian humanists? If these concepts are acceptable, as I think they are, they can only be used if they are rigorously defined.

Scholars who are reluctant to speak of Byzantine Renaissances put forward reasonable objections. As Hellenic learning and the education based on it had always been central features of Byzantine civilization, it may seem wrong to speak of times of rebirth of something that had always existed. Hence some modern Byzantinists prefer not to speak of the two Renaissances (Macedonian and Palaeologan) but to treat Byzantine cultural history as an alternation of periods of diminished cultural activity followed by times of more intense activity and renewal.¹⁰ But the exact terminology we might use matters less than the quality of the revival. The Byzantine new age that opened in 1261 ushered in such amazing achievements in classical scholarship and the arts that some special name for it is desirable. To talk of it as a cultural Renaissance does sum up the high *quality* of what was being achieved.

Not all modern Byzantinists are prepared to speak of Byzantine Christian humanists.¹¹ I find this concept useful, describing an important, distinctive feature of Byzantine civilization, but it needs careful defining.

The Byzantine civilization throughout its history had to face an almost permanent inner struggle. On the one hand, community of language, tradition of learning and philosophical interest led many Byzantine scholars to devote their lives to the study of Greek antiquity. On the other hand, these classical studies always found fervent critics in Byzantium, who considered ancient Greek literature and philosophy the products of paganism and, therefore, dangerous to Christians.¹²

It was a conflict between the 'inner' wisdom of the Christians and the 'outer' wisdom of the Hellenes (pagans).

¹⁰ I. Ševčenko, "The Palaeologan Renaissance" in W. Treadgold (1984), ref. 24, p. 145; D. Nicol (1979), ref. 18, pp. 32–33.

¹¹ There is a useful summary of this controversy by M. Gigante in "Teodoro Metochites umanista bizantino" in his *Scritti sulla Civiltà Letteraria Bizantina* (Naples, 1981), pp. 199–203.

¹² J. Meyendorff (1975), ref. 17, p. 95.

There had always been present in the Byzantine church, especially among its hermits and monks, highly respected mystics seeking direct contact with a manifestation of God, his 'energies' (chapter 19). They were indifferent to rationalism and hostile to scholarship, but Byzantines regarded them often as akin to saints. The Byzantines with good education did not form a homogeneous group. Some found hostility to classical scholarship so unacceptable as to become openly hostile to this monastic mysticism (cf. chapter 19). More usual was an attitude accepting both the value of scholarship and of the spiritual ideals of people seeking communion with God. In the early stages of Christian history in the Greek-speaking world we can call these people Christian humanists. Later, because of the special blend of Christianity and classicism that they tried to attain, it might be best to speak of "Byzantine Christian humanists". I find it useful to think of them under this heading; and it seems to describe some of the eminent Byzantine intellectuals whose activities form the core of this book.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330–c. 389 A.D.) was an outstanding early Christian humanist. He became the only Christian poet who was used habitually in Byzantine schools as a model of Attic Greek. For him there was no conflict between admiration for all that was best in ancient Greek literature and the use of Hellenic culture in the service of Christianity. Gregory's Christian humanism was bound to appeal to Planudes, a model representative of Byzantine Christian humanism. Hence the inclusion in Planudes' partly autograph ms.Laur.32.16 of 56 poems of St. Gregory, in what was otherwise almost entirely a collection of pagan poetry. The main theme of many of these Gregorian poems was the search for God and the spiritual sustenance that Gregory had found through this quest. In them Gregory had created an entirely new type of Christian spiritual autobiography. Planudes began his selection with one of these autobiographical poems, in which Gregory spoke of his youthful "only love for the glory of literature which had been assembled . . . at Athens, the ornament of Hellas". However, Gregory went on to say "that the knowledge of letters thus acquired should be devoted solely to the pursuit of the infinitely wise divine word"¹³ (chapter 12).

The encyclopaedia of Joseph the Philosopher (c. 1323) was a notable

¹³ S. Salaville, "De l'hellénisme au byzantisme. Essai de démarcation", *Échos d'Orient*, 30 (1931), pp. 31–32.

attempt to combine the 'inner' wisdom of the Christians and the 'outer' wisdom of secular (partly pagan) learning. Its author had declined the nomination by Andronikos II to the patriarchate of Constantinople. Joseph was convinced that the knowledge of classical literature "could be an aid to sanctity". He admitted

that it might be thought strange that a monk . . . should devote his time to natural science. But the real object of all scholarship was the true wisdom of the knowledge of God. If by studying natural philosophy one comes to a greater awareness of the wondrous works of the Creator, then it was time well spent¹⁴

(section IV of chapter 9 and section VII of chapter 10).

The opponents of Hellenic learning included many mystics whose chief concern was their own personal salvation (chapter 19); but among prelates favouring this devout and austere (mainly monastic) clergy were men who preserved high ideals of care for ordinary Byzantines and especially tried to protect them from upheavals caused by natural disasters and wars. Hostility, or at best indifference to scholarship, did not necessarily mean the absence of high spiritual values. Thus, Patriarch Athanasios I, who served twice as patriarch of Constantinople under Andronikos II, was an ill-educated and rude saint, whose passionate denunciations of the sins of Byzantines read like the Hebrew prophets. He tried to organize relief in the midst of a famine and openly clashed with the emperor who was aggravating it as part of his military strategy. It is possible to speak of that age as a time of double Renaissance (of learning and spirituality).¹⁵ The biographer of Patriarch Athanasios thought that he was expressing perfectly his outlook in citing from the New Testament the assurance that "the rich man will not enter the kingdom of Heaven" (chapters 6 and 9).

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CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESERVATION OF GREEK LITERATURE IN ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY BYZANTINE RENAISSANCE OF THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES

I

The achievements of the scholars of the Palaeologan Renaissance in preserving and making more accessible the ancient Greek literary legacy had a long history behind them. The main outlines of that background must be traced in order to make sense of what was accomplished between *c.* 1280 and *c.* 1330.

I must go back to the scholars active in the Hellenistic age, chiefly in the third and second centuries B.C., especially at Alexandria in Egypt.¹ Up to the second century A.D. literary texts were written mainly on papyrus rolls, usually one for each play of a dramatist or each book of a prose writer. Papyrus is a perishable material, but a considerable number of fragments, and sometimes even entire works, have been preserved in the dry climate of Egypt.² They reveal that standardized 'editions' of many popular writers were gradually produced by Hellenistic scholars.

Homer was the most widely read of the Greek poets. Even humble people, who had never read the two great epic poems attributed to him, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, had heard of the famous Homeric heroes. Thus Synesios of Cyrene, a charming writer of the early fifth century A.D., mentioned in a letter that the ordinary people of Cyrene, in modern Libya, "knew there is an emperor, for the tax collector comes every year, but who he is they know not. However, some think that his name is [that of the Homeric leader of the attack on Troy] King Agamemnon, and that he has a friend called Odysseus".³

¹ The chief sources for what follows are listed in part I of the references to this chapter.

² E. G. Turner (1980 ed.), ref. I.9; R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Roman Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor, 1965).

³ R. Browning (1975), ref. IV.4, p. 18.

Down to about 150 B.C. the surviving papyrus fragments of Homer vary widely, but thereafter the texts became much more uniform. The Alexandrian scholars had largely, though not entirely,⁴ imposed standardized texts. In the case of Homer and other particularly popular writers they also created learned commentaries. These were normally written on separate papyrus rolls to match the texts of the writers subject to comment. The most important commentator on Homer was Aristarchus, active at Alexandria in the second century B.C. He did not produce a new edition of Homer, as that had been done by his Alexandrian predecessors, but he met the need for explanations of Homer's language and content. By a stroke of good fortune large excerpts from Aristarchus' commentary are preserved in our oldest (Byzantine) manuscript of the *Iliad* (Venetian ms. Marcianus 454 A).⁵

Such works of Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.) as we still have (only a part) are mainly the legacy of the edition by Andronikos of Rhodes (1st century B.C.). In several cases he combined what were originally separate, but cognate, writings. He also appears to have decided which Aristotelian texts were authentic, and may have eliminated others.⁶

From the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. stretches a succession of commentators on various parts of Aristotle's writings. Some of them were distinguished, independent scholars and their commentaries made important contributions to the emending of the texts and the clarification of Aristotle's arguments (especially Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistios and Simplicius).⁷

Ancient Greek literary manuscripts were written not in cursive scripts, used in ordinary correspondence and business, but in capital letters, which filled much more space. This literary script, known as uncial, was written continuously, without separating words from each other, though there might be slight gaps between sentences. It was a type of writing intelligible only to a small well-educated elite.

⁴ E.g. see H. Lloyd-Jones' review of W. S. Barrett's edition of Hippolytos by Euripides in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 85 (1965).

⁵ R. Pfeiffer (1968), ref. I.16, pp. 212–19.

⁶ P. Moraux, *Les Listes Anciennes des Oeuvres d'Aristote* (Louvain, 1951) and *idem*, ref. I.5, vol. I (1973), parts 1–2.

⁷ Down to the late second century A.D. they are superbly discussed by P. Moraux, ref. I.5, vols. 1 and 2 (1973–84). See also R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London, 1990).

Its exclusive nature was heightened by the usual absence of punctuation, accents, and breathing signs in words starting with vowels, which in Greek are needed to indicate whether those initial vowels are hard or soft. This script would ultimately have to be abandoned when the civilization that created it passed away and the texts written in this manner ceased to be readily intelligible.

One major change occurred under the Roman Empire, when papyrus rolls began to be replaced by bound volumes, initially of papyrus, but increasingly of parchment, a much more enduring material. Such a *codex* became the more frequent type of literary manuscript in the course of the third century A.D. and began to predominate in the fourth century.

Several plays, or books of a prose work, could, for the first time, be combined within such a single volume, though the large space occupied by capital (majuscule) script might impose a practical limit on how much could be included. For example, the writings of Greek historians came usually to be divided into volumes of five books.⁸ Libanios, a leading rhetorical teacher at Antioch between 354 and 393, even possessed all the eight books of Thucydides in one volume "elegant in script and light to carry", though this was apparently an exceptional *de luxe* edition.⁹ These collections, in large volumes, are the direct ancestors of the later Byzantine manuscripts.

These books, with much wider margins than the papyrus rolls, made it easy to note textual variants and enter in the margins (and at the tops and bottoms of pages) commentaries on the text, previously kept on separate rolls. The notes derived from commentaries are known as *scholia* (singular *scholion*). Byzantine descendants of papyrus or parchment capital *codices* took over some of this scholiastic annotation.

The papyrus or parchment volumes made it possible for the first time to group together cognate works. Thus, the logical treatises of Aristotle began to be combined together in an order that was fixed by the fifth century A.D., and probably earlier. In this collection, known later as the *Organon*, an introduction by Porphyry (3rd century A.D.) preceded Aristotle's logical works.¹⁰

The danger was that the large *codices* would lead to the creation

⁸ L. Canfora (1974), ref. I.1, p. 25.

⁹ C. H. Roberts (1954), ref. I.7, p. 195.

¹⁰ F. Solmsen (1944), ref. I.8.

of selections from an author. I shall have much to say about Plutarch, a not very profound, but graceful and urbane historian and writer on miscellaneous subjects (c. 46–120 A.D.). He still could read the whole of Pindar, the greatest of the Greek poets of the fifth century B.C., whom he specially cherished. But a selection was made later of only four out of the original seventeen books of Pindar's poetry and only these four survived into the Byzantine tradition.

Small selections of plays by tragic and comic dramatists were created for theatrical or scholastic reasons. In the cases of Aeschylus and Sophocles, two of the greatest tragic dramatists of Athens in the fifth century B.C., collections of seven 'selected' tragedies were formed for each of them. The remaining plays became rare, though papyrus fragments and citations in ancient dictionaries show that they continued to be available to the end of antiquity, and probably later still. Aeschylus composed 90 plays, of which 72 were known to the Alexandrians, but only seven are entirely preserved through the Byzantine descendants of these 'selected' volumes.

Only seven plays of Sophocles survive, out of 123. We are luckier with Euripides, the youngest of the leading Athenian dramatists of the fifth century B.C. He wrote 92 plays, of which the Alexandrians possessed 78.¹¹ Again, a collection was formed of ten 'selected' plays. Most of them are combined with *scholia* derived from ancient commentaries. However, another collection of nine plays has survived, arranged in alphabetic order of their titles, known as the 'alphabetic' plays. It may have been a 'commercial' rather than a scholarly collection, as there are no *scholia* copied from commentaries.¹² It may have formed part of a larger assemblage of Euripidean tragedies available at Alexandria, of which only one volume, containing nine plays, was preserved as late as the ninth century A.D. That volume of nine plays, or a copy of it, was 'rediscovered' in the early fourteenth century by a leading teacher, Demetrios Triklinios, and, for the first time, he brought its nine plays into wider circulation (chapter 13).

Parchment volumes written in capital letters remained the normal type of literary texts until the ninth century, when a far-reaching change occurred. Current, cursive scripts were adapted to the writing

¹¹ G. Murray, *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 96–101.

¹² The tradition of the text of Euripides is discussed well in W. S. Barrett (ed.), *Euripides, Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 50–53.

of scholarly and literary works. Some of the surviving uncial manuscripts were copied in this new manner. The technical name for this change is "transliteration into minuscule" and most of the surviving Byzantine literature is in this form (cf. section II, below).

II

Some essential developments of the first Byzantine Renaissance (9th–10th century) must be outlined as a preface to what happened in the Early Palaeologan Renaissance. Furthermore, there are important contrasts between the scholarly enterprises of scholars active during that first Renaissance and their successors after 1261.

The introduction of a scholarly variant of cursive script into the copying of literary manuscripts (and many religious ones) formed one central feature of the Renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries.¹³ The earliest minuscule manuscripts that can be connected with an identifiable scriptorium were written at the monastery of Studios founded in 798 by St. Theodore, but this type of manuscript was probably developed earlier, perhaps by Theodore's uncle, Plato, who was until 794 abbot of Sakkudion in Bithynia. C. M. Mazzucchi has suggested that the practice may have originated in the last two decades of the eighth century.¹⁴ The products of this and other monastic scriptoria were religious texts, and, though this reform of scripts ultimately promoted the spread of scientific, philosophical, and literary learning, this was not its initial purpose.

The earliest *dated* minuscule manuscript is a copy of the Gospels written at Studios in 835, by Nicholas the second abbot of that monastery.¹⁵ "From *c.* 850, whenever a fresh copy of a text was required" (except for Bibles and liturgical texts) "the chances were that the scribe would use the new script; after *c.* 950 it was almost inconceivable that he would do otherwise".¹⁶

The change-over to cursive minuscules offered many advantages. They were designed to provide more readily intelligible texts. The contrast here with older, capital-letter texts was very considerable.

¹³ The chief sources for this section are listed in parts II–IV of the references to this chapter.

¹⁴ C. M. Mazzucchi (1991), ref. III.8, p. 44.

¹⁵ R. Devreesse (1954), ref. I.2, p. 32.

¹⁶ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, pp. 66–67.

The disadvantages of the latter need describing more fully. A manuscript in capital letters was always written as a continuous text, without separating words from each other, though gaps and some punctuation might divide sentences. There were no accents in each word. However, a certain amount of accentuation was present in some late capital *codices* and some, likewise, contained the breathing signs needed whenever a Greek word starts with a vowel.¹⁷ N. G. Wilson has made the useful suggestion that much depended on whether a manuscript written in capital letters had been intended for experienced scholars or for less skilled readers, who might have needed additional aids to understanding what they were studying.¹⁸ Minuscule manuscripts went much further in offering such improvements. Words, and not just sentences, tended to be separated from each other. Fuller punctuation, breathing signs before words starting with vowels, and accents, gradually came to be systematically inserted.

Minuscule texts could be copied much faster than uncial manuscripts and the writing occupied much less space, so that volumes of the same size could contain much more text. A saving of up to two-thirds was possible. Thus, *codices* of historians, which in uncial script consisted usually of not more than five books, came to comprise in minuscule as many as ten.¹⁹

Transliteration of texts from majuscule script into minuscule was bound to be a laborious process, as it involved scrutinizing every word. Longer texts were not likely to be transliterated often. Not more than two or three independent transliterations seem to lie behind many later Byzantine versions of important authors. But that meant a serious narrowing down of what was preserved. Uncial texts which had not been transliterated became increasingly puzzling with the passage of time and their progressive obsolescence led to the loss of a large part of this capital letter inheritance.

Byzantine administration in its more informal operations had always used cursive texts. But the gradual adoption of a particularly clear and legible literary minuscule script improved the quality of Byzantine administrative documents and formed part of an improvement in education and culture of Byzantine officialdom, especially in the cen-

¹⁷ E.g. a capital-script fragment of Aristotle's *Sophistici Elenchi* shown in a facsimile in A. Severyns (1925), ref. III.9.

¹⁸ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, pp. 67–68.

¹⁹ L. Canfora (1974), ref. I.1, pp. 27–28.

tral government at Constantinople. The new script was in established use for official records by the reign of Basil I (867–86).²⁰

To return to literary manuscripts. The period of transition in the ninth and tenth centuries must be treated very flexibly. Some very early minuscule manuscripts exhibit a hybrid mixture of features. One such *codex* is ms.Laur.28.18, which might be earlier than the earliest dated Studite volume (dating from 835).²¹ It is a volume of commentaries on Ptolemy's "Handbook of Astronomy", with geometric figures drawn very clearly and beautifully. Its editor has described it as a very careful copy from a single capital predecessor.²² Though written in a very regular minuscule, it was still copied as a continuous text, without separating words within each sentence. There are few ligatures linking letters together. It is a copy of two different commentaries and accentuation appears to be more frequent in one than in the other. Perhaps the models from which they were copied differed in this matter.

To return to transliteration. Recently, Jean Irigoin has identified the seven tragedies of Sophocles in ms.Laur.32.9 as the direct product of a first transliteration from an uncial text (or texts),²³ though the other contents of this *codex* (tragedies of Aeschylus and the *Argonautica* of Apollonios of Rhodes) appear to have been copied from exemplars already in minuscule. The entire manuscript appears to date from roughly the middle of the tenth century.

The two copyists employed on the Sophoclean section faced a double legacy of sources. They had the task of copying the text of Sophocles, but also of adding in the margins an accretion of *scholia*. There are no means of telling whether all these *scholia* were already in their uncial exemplar or whether they were gathered from diverse sources. Many of the ancient commentaries on literary authors have preserved "excellent learning which is usually different in kind from that which makes up the bulk of medieval *scholia*" inherited by the Byzantines. These are apt to be selections of comments "often jumbled

²⁰ W. T. Treadgold, "The revival of the Byzantine learning and the revival of the Byzantine state", *American Historical Rev.*, 84 (1979), p. 1265, n. 72.

²¹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, p. 65 and E. B. Fryde (1996), vol. I, ref. II.5, pp. 40 and 75.

²² A. Rome, *Commentaires de Pappus et de Théon d'Alexandrie sur l'Almageste*, II (Vatican City, *Studi e Testi*, 72, 1936), p. LXXXVIII.

²³ J. Irigoin (1974), ref. IV.15, pp. xxvii–xxxiv.

and confused in the process of extraction".²⁴ E. G. Turner described the collections of *scholia* busily copied by the Byzantines as but remnants of a shipwreck (*un naufrage*). But as those 'skeletons' contain names of ancient scholars or interesting linguistic remarks, we have to pay attention to them.²⁵

The men who transliterated Sophocles in ms.Laur.32.9 copied such *scholia* as they could find without questioning their relevance. Thus, we have here a *scholion* to a lost verse of Sophoclean *Antigone*, actually missing in the main text of this *codex*. The *scholia* copied here derive in part from ancient commentaries, but include also all sorts of later additions mixed together, so that the successive layers of their sources cannot be distinguished any more.²⁶

Two copyists were employed. The first one was merely entrusted with copying the main text, which he appears to have done very faithfully. He also occasionally inserted corrections of his mistakes and added some marginal notes. But the main task of revision fell to a colleague, probably a more scholarly and certainly an intelligent man, who systematically introduced punctuation and accents (probably missing in the copied sources) and added most of the *scholia*. In order to distinguish them from the text, he wrote them in small capital letters,²⁷ a practice typical of the manuscripts written in the middle and later decades of the tenth century.

The decision to transliterate a text gave a chance to produce a new revised edition of an author, combining the best readings derived from more than one *codex*, and surrounding the main text with information derived from ancient commentaries, or, at least, from such fragments of them as still survived. Attempts at such complex scholarly editions may, indeed, have been older than the practice of transliteration. One such attempt was made about the middle of the ninth century to achieve a scholarly text of Homer's *Iliad*.²⁸ We do not know in what script that edition was copied. Its minuscule descendant, *Codex Venetus a* (ms. Marcianus gr. 454A) dates probably from the first half of the tenth century and there may have existed earlier intermediary versions.

²⁴ E. G. Turner (1980 ed.), ref. I.9, pp. 121–24.

²⁵ E. G. Turner, "L'érudition alexandrine et les papyrus", *Chronique d'Égypte*, 37 (Brussels, 1962), p. 152.

²⁶ J. Irigoin (1994), ref. IV.15, p. xxv.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. xxviii–xxxiv.

²⁸ R. Browning (1975), ref. IV.4, pp. 23–25.

To return to ms.Laur.32.9, of about a century later than that edition of *Iliad*. It combines two books, originally separate. The newly transliterated Sophoclean collection was one. The other portion consisted of Aeschylus and the *Argonautica* by Apollonios of Rhodes, written by different people, and that portion supplies good examples of the more complex, erudite methods. None of the texts in this second part were products of direct transliteration, but derived from earlier *codices*, already in minuscule.

The text of the *Argonautica* is clearly the product of a complex operation involving a combination of at least two earlier *codices*. There are four books. The initial text was based on an exemplar with gaps and in some disarray, but reflecting a unique and good tradition of the text, confirmed by an ancient papyrus fragment. In the original exemplar books 1 and 4 were particularly defective and were subsequently revised from a second *codex*, representing a different tradition of the text.²⁹

In ms.Laur.32.9 the text of the seven tragedies of Aeschylus (now only partly preserved), written by three different copyists, is very uneven in quality. The probable reason lies in its ultimate derivation (through the intermediary of several earlier *codices*) from seven independent rolls of papyri, one for each play.³⁰

Ms.Par.gr.1853 containing a number of non-logical works of Aristotle dates from about the same time, around the middle of the tenth century.³¹ It consisted originally of two separate books combined together by a second owner, also active in roughly the same period. The first book was copied from older minuscule exemplars, but some of the texts in the second book may be the earliest products of transliteration.

In addition to Aristotle's own texts, there are in some parts *scholia*, possibly derived from multiple sources. The patron of this enterprise in some cases compared Aristotelian versions in more than one *codex*. This learned patron was presumably responsible for the comment that the short *Metaphysica*, probably by Aristotle's leading disciple,

²⁹ F. Vian (ed.), *Apollonios de Rhodes, Argonautiques*, II (2nd ed., Paris, Collection Budé, 1993); J. Irigoin (1981), ref. IV.14, p. 34.

³⁰ L. Canfora (1974), ref. I.1, pp. 17 and 35; J. Irigoin (1977), ref. I.3, pp. 239–40.

³¹ For an authoritative account of it see P. Moraux (1967), ref. IV.16. The comments that follow are mainly based on it and also summarize the discussion in my book (1996), ref. II.5, vol. I, pp. 58–9, 81. For some of the *scholia* see also H. D. Saffrey, *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 1990), pp. 81–94.

Theophrastus, had been first identified as his work by Nicholas of Damascus (a friend of the emperor Augustus). Another note reported the belief of Alexander of Aphrodisias, an outstanding Aristotelian commentator (active *c.* 200 A.D.), that book 1 of Aristotelian *Metaphysica* was a genuine work of Aristotle.

The second owner also scrutinized the first part of the present volume that he had acquired. He collated the version of Aristotle's *De Anima* that he had found there with another manuscript and decided that this second text was better. He commissioned the copying of that new version and then proceeded to do what no scholar would do today. He excised the original version, though fortunately one little fragment was left behind. This incident shows that even an undoubtedly erudite, tenth-century Byzantine was not concerned with evidence for preserving a variant textual tradition of an important author.

A letter by a well-connected schoolmaster, active in the first half of the tenth century, reveals other limitations of Byzantine textual scholarship.³² This man had been entrusted with copying a manuscript of an ecclesiastical writer. He had collated a number of *codices*. He explained how he tried to judge between different textual variants that he had discovered. "I shall bow to the opinions of my superiors." A typical Byzantine would certainly like to follow established authorities. He then went on: "in cases of doubt, sense, style and doctrinal consistency shall be my guides". These were reasonable criteria, but he was obviously unaware of the need to establish the textual descent of his sources.

The textual quality of the transliterated versions produced by Byzantines in this period obviously varied from author to author. It is good for Plato's philosophical dialogues, but these texts were probably authoratively edited quite early by his associates and followers in the Academy of Athens and well preserved thereafter.³³ Literary texts were in a much greater danger. When an unusually large number of older papyrus fragments is available for a writer, as is the case with Apollonios of Rhodes, whose *Argonautica* was very popular in ancient Egypt, our conclusions about the quality of his transliterated Byzantine text (as in ms.Laur.32.9) become very disturbing.

³² R. Browning (1977), ref. II.1, no. IX, letter 88, on pp. 419–20.

³³ F. Solmsen, "The academic and the Alexandrian editions of Plato's works", *Illinois Classical Studies*, 6, pt. 1 (1981), pp. 102–11.

These numerous papyri show that the textual tradition of the *Argonautica* was manifestly jumbled in Antiquity. By the time of the Renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries many variant versions were lost "and along them were lost many readings, not all of which will have been false. There was in fact an enormous number of readings that did not reach" our Byzantine transliterated manuscripts.³⁴

Thus, "the papyri are a constant reminder that even an apparently sound text is not necessarily sound." The same conclusion must be reached when sufficient citations of an author survive in other writers of antiquity (the indirect tradition). They often show, likewise, "that our modern texts are in a worse condition than they appear to be".³⁵ This is certainly true of the tragedies of Aeschylus in the same ms.Laur.32.9, the oldest text of his dramas. Speaking of the fragmentary version of his *Agamemnon* in that *codex*, as well as of the full versions of this tragedy in later manuscripts, E. Fränkel remarked that

the precariousness of the authorities on which in the main our text of the *Agamemnon* rests comes out even more strikingly when we look at the quotations furnished by ancient writers, lexicographers etc.³⁶

The Byzantine transliterations of the ninth and tenth centuries were partly the cause of the defective quality of many literary texts. In many cases the men responsible for them had probably little or no choice. But occasionally they may have been excessively selective.

III

Only a remnant of the oldest transliterated manuscripts, and of the early copies made from them, survives today. A succession of modern historians had paid much attention to this evidence. By doing this they remained on solid ground³⁷ and these texts deserve special study as identifiable ancestors of the later Byzantine textual traditions. The earliest chronology of the transliterations of different kinds of subjects has been much discussed. At present there is no certain

³⁴ M. W. Haslam (1978), ref. IV.10, pp. 68-9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁶ E. Fränkel (ed.), *Aischylos, Agamemnon* (Oxford, 1950), I, pp. 10-11.

³⁷ This is particularly true of J. Irigoin (1954, republished 1980), ref. II.6; A. Dain (1955, republished 1980), ref. II.4; P. Lemerle (1971), I.4.

evidence that any *literary* texts were transliterated before the early years of the tenth century. This does not prove that they did not exist, or even survive today, as we can only speak with assurance about *dated codices*.³⁸ Others can be tentatively added to them on palaeographic evidence. If we confine ourselves to this group of texts, a sort of chronological pattern can be suggested. Only religious and scientific minuscule manuscripts may be assigned with fair probability to the first half or the middle of the ninth century. Somewhat later came collections of non-scientific, philosophical texts. The earliest known minuscule manuscripts of leading Greek historians and orators date, at the earliest, from around 900, but the earliest minuscule *codices* of Thucydides (ms.Laur.69.2) and Herodotus (ms.Laur.70.3), the two greatest ancient Greek historians, are somewhat later.³⁹ However, concentration on transliterated, minuscule manuscripts reveals only a part of the full picture of the activities of scholars during the first Byzantine Renaissance. There is a need for taking a wider view.

There are several connected problems. Did there still exist in the ninth century a considerable number of majuscule manuscripts (in capital letters) which were never transliterated during the first Byzantine Renaissance? There is now enough evidence that there was an appreciable number of such survivors and some of them may have lingered long enough to furnish sources for the scholars of the second, Palaeologan Renaissance (cf. chapter 8).

Secondly, were these majuscule survivors read more widely in the ninth century than has usually been assumed hitherto? The answer to this must be much more tentative, but that question, too, is worth exploring.

N. G. Wilson, in commenting on the preservation at Strasbourg of a parchment uncial fragment of the *Argonautica* of Apollonios of Rhodes, an epic poem which "did not normally form part of the school curriculum", has recognized that "the discovery of a few more scraps of this kind would force us to revise drastically our reconstruction of the intellectual world of the ninth century".⁴⁰ There is other evidence suggesting that the number of literary texts in capi-

³⁸ For lists of these see R. Devreesse (1954), ref. I.2, pp. 32-3.

³⁹ J. Irigoin (1954, republished 1980), ref. II.6, pp. 192-93 and n. 90 on p. 204.

⁴⁰ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.10, p. 85.

tal letters lingering into the ninth century, and continuing to be read, may have been larger than has often been assumed hitherto.⁴¹

The surviving manuscripts in capital-letters that can be assigned to the ninth century are almost all religious or scientific. Evidence about the possible presence then of numerous others, including literary ones, must be sought elsewhere. We start with Tarasios, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 806), the great-uncle of Photios, the most learned patriarch of the second half of that century. Ignatios the Deacon (d. after 842), a high official of the patriarchal church and a pupil of Tarasios, explicitly mentioned that the latter had introduced him to ancient Greek poetry. A dramatic dialogue by Ignatios between God, Adam, Eve and the serpent in the Garden of Eden contains a number of citations from dramas of Sophocles and Euripides, all from plays that we still have.⁴² Photios' earliest important work was a dictionary of the classical Greek words "which are most up-to-date and most frequently used" (his own description).⁴³ This *Lexicon* contains a large number of citations from these two dramatists, as well as Aeschylus. Some were probably derived from earlier dictionaries, but a considerable proportion again come from plays still extant, creating a strong presumption that their complete texts were available to him.⁴⁴ His most famous work, known now as his *Bibliotheca*, listed 279 books read by him, on which he wrote critical comments. The date of it is controversial and, while an initial core may have been composed around 858, additions may have been made over the next two decades. No dramatists or poets are included and Photios does not seem to have had any serious appreciation of the *contents* of such writers. But the *Bibliotheca* contains reports on about 60 works of secular literature "not available to us in any form other than his summary".⁴⁵ They are chiefly historians and orators. Of the orators listed by him, some are now wholly missing and he knew many more authentic speeches of the remainder than we have today.⁴⁶ Presumably, a large proportion of these texts were never transliterated and became lost later for that reason.

⁴¹ This is particularly urged by R. Browning (1977), ref. II.1, no. XIV and K. Alpers (1991), ref. IV.3.

⁴² R. Browning (1977), ref. II.1, no. XIV, pp. 405–7.

⁴³ P. Lemerle, ref. II.4 (English ed., 1986), pp. 214–15.

⁴⁴ R. Browning (1977), ref. II.1, no. XIV, pp. 403–04.

⁴⁵ N. G. Wilson (1967, reprinted in 1980), ref. II.7, p. 61.

⁴⁶ G. Murray, *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 98–9.

Contemporary with Photios were scholars particularly concerned with making the text of Homer more accessible. One of them was Kometas, professor at the newly revived imperial university of Constantinople, active probably in the third quarter of the ninth century.⁴⁷ In the same circle of scholars may have originated two other major, scholarly enterprises. One was the text of the *Iliad* with *scholia*, derived from a large assortment of commentaries, the prototype of the later Venetian ms. Marcianus gr. 454A. The scholar responsible for this prototype "was collecting and putting together in a single text all that he could lay his hands on of the surviving Homeric scholarship of Antiquity". R. Browning has suggested that he was trying to reconstruct the original Homeric text. That he had neither the evidence nor the technique to realize this aim does not diminish the seriousness of the intention.⁴⁸

The other scholarly venture was the earliest Byzantine etymological dictionary, the *Etymologicum Genuinum*. Again we do not know in what script it was written. Its two earliest, surviving minuscule descendants date from the very late ninth and tenth centuries respectively. It contains twenty-five quotations from Aristophanes, the greatest Athenian comic dramatist of the fifth century B.C. There are also quotations from several poets active in Hellenistic Egypt in the third and second centuries B.C., the most numerous being the ones from Apollonios of Rhodes. K. Alpers, who is a leading authority on this dictionary, is convinced that its author was not using excerpts from elsewhere, but had the actual full texts of those writers.⁴⁹

The inescapable conclusion from all this evidence is that we must push back into the ninth century the interest of some Byzantine scholars, presumably chiefly at Constantinople, in the using of a considerable range of literary sources, which, perhaps, they may have read mainly in capital, not transliterated texts. Many of those works were lost subsequently, perhaps because they had never been transliterated. This is not surprising as there was only a limited number of scholarly patrons able to organize the costly work of transliteration and suitable copyists must have been fairly rare. The majority of minuscule manuscripts dating from the ninth and tenth centuries

⁴⁷ P. Lemerle, ref. I.4 (English ed., 1986), pp. 191–92.

⁴⁸ R. Browning (1975), ref. IV.4, pp. 23–25.

⁴⁹ K. Alpers (1991), ref. IV.3, p. 242.

contain only religious works, written probably mainly in monastic scriptoria, not much interested in copying anything else.

IV

Gilbert Murray, one of the most distinguished British classical scholars, writing in 1913, expressed some very negative judgements about the equipment of Byzantines for adequately preserving the ancient Greek literary legacy.

They did preserve the old literature, though they could not understand its value. They believed it was beautiful even if they could not see the beauty. . . . And though they understood neither the drama nor the poetry, nor the philosophy, nor even the history, they did at least copy letter by letter the great books.⁵⁰

These pessimistic judgements can be substantiated to a considerable extent from examining some of the leading figures of the first Byzantine Renaissance. But one cannot be assured that there were no exceptions even in the ninth and tenth centuries. "Byzantine culture was less monolithic than is often assumed."⁵¹

Paul Lemerle, speaking only of the period up to the late tenth century, echoes Murray's pessimistic reflections. His comments are particularly significant: "it is not at all clear" that the Byzantine Greeks of that society

truly appreciated the beauty of Homer and Sophocles, Thucydides or Demosthenes. . . . The writings of Greece remained almost incomprehensible to them. . . . We are shocked by the use they made [during that period] of the great works we love. They did not read them much; they were easily content with *florilegia*, collections of quotations, glossaries, commentaries and manuals. They did not seek out the spirit of them; everything seems to have been reduced to techniques. Often their erudition surprises us, but. . . is ancient literature anything but a vast store of props at the service of a learned and complicated rhetoric?⁵²

Photios (c. 810–c. 93), twice patriarch of Constantinople (858–67, 877–86) in Lemerle's eyes "perhaps most truly represents Byzantine

⁵⁰ G. Murray, *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 104–05.

⁵¹ R. Browning (1977), ref. II.1, XIV, p. 401.

⁵² P. Lemerle, ref. I.4 (English ed., 1986), p. 352.

civilisation", with its combination of Christian orthodoxy and a form of Hellenism. He was an impressively intelligent man and extremely learned, which makes the limitations of his use of the classical legacy all the more significant. He was "the founder of a Byzantine classicism. . . . His contribution to *rhetoric* was great, and to vocabulary, language, composition and style, to the rules governing [literary] genres".⁵³ In his *Bibliotheca* he summarises even pagan writers, overtly hostile to Christianity, if he can commend their use of Greek language and their style of writing.⁵⁴ N. G. Wilson, in one of the latest publications about him, describes Photios as "not so much a student of ancient history and society as a man of letters with a highly developed sensitivity to style."⁵⁵ In one of the few summaries of an outstanding literary artist, Lucian, a satirist of genius (2nd c. A.D.), Photios is delighted by Lucian's parade of the absurdities of pagan religion and he concludes that Lucian was a person without any beliefs.⁵⁶ He is blind to the underlying seriousness of Lucian's portrayals of the follies of mankind. A succession of later readers, unlike Photios, had been moved by the challenging appeal of Lucian's humane wisdom. Of course, Photios admired Lucian's excellent style, but thought it "ill-suited to the topics which he chose to criticize".⁵⁷ His older contemporary, Leo, corrected a part of the text of Plato's *Laws*.⁵⁸ But Photios belonged to the more typical mainstream of Byzantine educated ecclesiastics, who distrusted Plato far more than Aristotle and feared the challenge of Platonic writings to Christian orthodoxy.⁵⁹

Emperor Constantine VII (d. 959) was one of the most learned men of the first half of the tenth century. "By Byzantine standards he was one of the most elegant writers of his age".⁶⁰ But his most ambitious scholarly enterprise was, in G. Dagron's words, "one of the most baffling that had ever been attempted".⁶¹ Excerpts were

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 349–50.

⁵⁴ R. Henry (ed.), ref. II.10, vol. I (1959), pp. 158–60 (Eunapius) and vol. II (1960), pp. 65–6 (Zosimus).

⁵⁵ N. G. Wilson (1994), ref. II.10, p. 18.

⁵⁶ J. Bompaire, "Photius et la seconde Sophistique d'après la Bibliothèque", *Travaux et Mémoires*, 8 (Paris, 1981), pp. 84–8.

⁵⁷ N. G. Wilson (1994), ref. II.10, p. 134.

⁵⁸ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, p. 84.

⁵⁹ J. Irigoin (1954, reprinted 1980), ref. II.6, p. 188.

⁶⁰ R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Hellenistic origins of Byzantine literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), p. 43.

⁶¹ G. Dagron (1973), ref. I.4, p. 405.

assembled from a large array of authors, mainly historians. They were grouped into fifty-three collections arranged under moral and practical topics.⁶² Modern scholars are grateful to Constantine for preserving much that would otherwise be lost. But the excerpts, separated from their context, are often hard to interpret. As Lemerle justly pointed out,

a compilation which cuts and breaks up the sources and gets them out of order and scatters the pieces in such a way as to destroy the sequence and the meaning is *anti-historical* [my italics].

Of the sense in which we would understand the work of a historian, "Constantine had not the slightest idea", though his excerpts came from some of the greatest ancient historians, including Herodotus, Thucydides and Polybius.⁶³

However, a few learned enterprises can be cited that went against the main currents of Byzantine traditional scholarship. One was an attempt to get away from one of the key preoccupations of Byzantine teachers, the prevailing, intellectually very shallow instruction in rhetoric. The most influential handbook was the treatise of Hermogenes (late second century A.D.) and numerous subsequent commentaries on him. Hermogenes supplied many of the rules for Photius' stylistic judgements.⁶⁴ In his edition of Hermogenes in 1913 H. Rabe used 132 Byzantine manuscripts.⁶⁵ It was symptomatic of the Byzantine preoccupation with form rather than substance that Hermogenes "who is negligible as a thinker, and less than negligible as a guide to literary creativity, could have retained so dominating an influence".⁶⁶

Hermogenes was "not concerned with the philosophical" side of rhetoric. The scholar who commissioned, probably about the middle of the tenth century, a collection of rhetorical texts in ms.Par.gr.1741, copied by four scribes contemporary with each other, had a much more profound conception of the nature of rhetoric.⁶⁷ The texts seem

⁶² Detailed account by Lemerle, ref. I.4 (English ed., 1986), pp. 323-32.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 330-32.

⁶⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, p. 104.

⁶⁵ H. Rabe, *Hermogenes, Opera* (Teubner, Leipzig, 1913), pp. xvi-xix.

⁶⁶ M. Hadas, "Hellenistic literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), pp. 32-33. See section II of chapter 11, for a fuller discussion of rhetoric during the early Palaeologan Renaissance.

⁶⁷ For what follows see the two articles in ref. IV.9 (Harlfinger and Reinsch, 1970 and G. Aujac, 1974).

to be derived from different sources, though none of them are transliteration copies.

The best early minuscule manuscripts containing Hermogenes and the commentators on the Hermogenian *corpus* date from about the same period.⁶⁸ D. Harlfinger and D. Reinsch regard ms.Par.gr.1741 as a deliberate challenge to the Hermogenian tradition of technical rhetorical writings (an *Anti-Corpus*, as they call this manuscript).⁶⁹ It contains the oldest and the best version of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the most profound ancient discussion of rhetoric.⁷⁰ This is followed by Aristotle's *Poetics*, again our oldest Greek text. Some of the other short treatises in it may suggest that it was desired to collect together these various types of eloquence.⁷¹ Our manuscript also contains a number of writings by Dionysios of Halicarnassos, one of the most acute ancient literary critics, specializing in studies of ancient Athenian orators,⁷² who wrote at Rome in the time of the emperor Augustus. Two of these, a fragment of "On Imitation" and the second letter to Ammaeus "On Thucydides" (a kind of Appendix to an earlier Dionysian study of the style and language of Thucydides) are unique copies. An important late work of Dionysios, *De compositione verborum*, discussing the methods and the desirable qualities of a literary composition, is also present in ms.Par.1741, in what seems a superior text to another, independent version copied into a manuscript of probably early eleventh century (ms.Laur.59.15). But, unlike the huge number of Hermogenian manuscripts, the two treatises of Aristotle and the writings of Dionysios continued to be rare.⁷³

The second, unusual, scholarly enterprise may date, according to the latest discussion of its products, from the third quarter of the ninth century.⁷⁴ It resulted in the so-called 'philosophical collection'.

⁶⁸ Aujac, *ibid.* (1974), p. 2.

⁶⁹ Harlfinger and Reinsch, *ibid.*, (1970), p. 32. I am inclined to accept this suggestion, but this view is not shared by Aujac (p. 25).

⁷⁰ F. Solmsen, "The Aristotelian tradition in ancient rhetoric", *American Journal of Philology*, 62 (1941).

⁷¹ Aujac, ref. IV.9 (1974), p. 17.

⁷² The best appraisal of the high quality of Dionysios' critical writings is in M. Untersteiner, "Dionisio di Alicarnasso, fondatore della critica pseudoepigrafica" *Scritti Minori* (Brescia, 1971), pp. 645–68.

⁷³ Maximus Planudes (1255–1305), one of the greatest scholars of his time did, however, include the *De compositione verborum* of Dionysios among the texts used by him. Cf. below, chapter 11.

⁷⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, pp. 86–8; L. G. Westerink and J. Combès, ref. IV.19, pp. LXXII–LXXVI.

According to the latest count, the scriptorium that produced it left behind at least 19 different manuscripts, copied probably for different patrons. Only ten survivors have philosophical content and it has been conjectured that a further five lost manuscripts may have been the ancestors of philosophical works. The extant codices were probably derived from earlier copies, already transliterated. The Venetian ms. Marcianus gr. 246, containing two treatises by Damascius, head of the Neoplatonist Academy at Athens around 529, and one of the most difficult texts of the entire surviving Greek philosophical literature, was learnedly criticized and emended by its copyist, who may have been one of the men who organized this collection.⁷⁵

Some of the authors copied, like those who wrote commentaries on Aristotelian treatises, would not have incurred any condemnation, but several other works are our only copies of Neoplatonic writings, very suspect to the upholders of Orthodox Christianity.⁷⁶ "It is not unduly adventurous to imagine the philosophical texts produced as a set, and in any case" they "give us evidence for the activity of intellectuals at the time".⁷⁷ The manuscripts that could have incurred censure of Orthodox religious circles included ms.Par.gr.1807, which contains the two 'political' treatises of Plato, the *Republic* and the *Laws*, together with the *Timaeus*, with its myth of the creation of the world as the centrepiece of the Neoplatonic theological system, the *Critias*, as well as some other, mostly spurious, texts. There were two manuscripts containing Platonic commentaries by Proclus (d. 485), the one on the *Timaeus* being particularly important for the Neoplatonists. The same was true of the already cited ms.Marc.gr.246, containing a short essay by Damaskios on the first principles of philosophy and his commentary on the Platonic *Parmenides*, another centrepiece of the Neoplatonic doctrinal system. Other manuscripts contained commentaries by Alexandrian scholars on other Platonic dialogues, less offensive to Orthodox readers, though one must stress that anything connected with Plato would be suspect to them. The manuscripts were copied and revised very carefully. Thus, in the commentaries by Olympiodorus (active in the middle of the sixth century) on several Platonic dialogues, the *scholia* by the man who revised the text are accompanied by citations from the text of Plato

⁷⁵ Westerink and Combès, ref. IV.19., p. LXXVII.

⁷⁶ For more details, see below, chapter 3, sections IV and V, and chapter 10.

⁷⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. II.9, p. 87.

to which the *scholia* referred and these citations clearly have been collated with Plato's original texts.⁷⁸

The lost volumes conjecturally attributed to the collection may have included the ancestor of the main tradition of volume 1 in the two-volume edition of Plato, on which our modern text is mainly based. An even more exciting possibility is the inclusion of the lost prototype of the teachings of Plotinus (d. 270 A.D.), the profoundest of the Neoplatonist thinkers.

Considering the dangers . . . attendant on the close study of Plato from a philosophical as opposed to a strictly linguistic and literary point of view, this group of texts is a remarkable phenomenon.

Some of the Neoplatonic treatises would be regarded as particularly damnable by Orthodox readers. Several of them survived only in these unique manuscripts.

V

There existed important contrasts between the interests and achievements of the scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries and their successors during the early Palaeologan Renaissance. The scholars of the first Renaissance transliterated into minuscule only a part of the classical legacy still accessible to them and thus contributed, through lack of interest, paucity of learned personnel and lack of financial resources, to the loss of many texts. The scholars active after the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261 were more eager to rescue every scrap of ancient text that still could be rediscovered, because pride in their Hellenic legacy was one of the few things left to the ruling elite in a world where Byzantium had shrunk to a weak, small state, threatened on every side.

Because they had often recovered more versions of the same texts, the Palaeologan scholars could produce superior editions of ancient Greek writers. They were more assured in handling these texts and were also, therefore, far more ready to attempt conjectural emendations of Greek classics.⁷⁹ Many of their emendations were sound, or, at least, fairly plausible.

⁷⁸ G. Westerink (ed.), *Olympiodorus. Commentary on the 'First Alcibiades' of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1956), p. xi.

⁷⁹ N. G. Wilson in *Gnomon*, 38 (1966), pp. 338–39.

I have cited the pessimistic judgements of Gilbert Murray and Paul Lemerle about the lack of true understanding among the Byzantine educated elite of the human content and the beauty of the best Ancient literature. That seems to be true of the scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries and of the tiny elite that used their writings. I think that there had been a movement towards more understanding and genuine appreciation by the time we reach the century after 1261, though this is more a deduction from what we know about some of the leading scholars or statesmen like Maximos Planudes, Theodore Metochites, and Demetrios Kydones, than a matter of explicit evidence.

The educated elite for which the Palaeologan scholars catered seems to have become larger than was the case in the ninth and the tenth centuries. Its core was still the same, consisting of a part of the higher clergy, the imperial officialdom or men aspiring to enter it, and members of the professional classes, teachers, lawyers and doctors. But more of the landed aristocracy seem to have been fairly well-educated in the Palaeologan period, and some of their women-folk. At least, more of them were literate and interested in serious literature other than purely devotional writings (cf. chapter 9).

Lastly one has an impression that the Palaeologan scholars were active in a more cultured and humane society than were the Byzantines of the ninth and tenth centuries. What we know of the Palaeologan mosaics and paintings contributes to this impression. It was certainly a more cosmopolitan society, much more open to influences from a Western Europe that was now much better educated and more civilized than had been the Westerners of the Carolingian society and the Dark Age that followed in the Western Europe of the late ninth and tenth centuries.

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CHAPTER THREE

FROM *c.* 1000 TO THE DISASTER OF THE FOURTH CRUSADE (1203–04)

I

The two centuries studied here formed a vital link between the cultural achievements of the ninth and tenth centuries and the Renaissance of the early Palaeologan period. But only developments that anticipated or influenced that later Renaissance will be discussed. Much else that is interesting, but not obviously relevant to this study, must be left out, like the historical writings of Anna Komnena or the eccentric classical learning of John Tzetzes.

No clear line divides the scholarly and cultural activities in the tenth century from what happened in the next few decades. But there was a notable educational revival under a great emperor, Constantine IX (1042–55),¹ and, thereafter, there were some very distinctive, new developments. A greatly increased body of Byzantine literature survives from the twelfth century. “There was a vast number of men of letters, and presumably of readers too”.² Imitation of what passed for classical, Attic Greek flourished and it was the hey-day of rhetorical panegyrics. The range of literary genres and styles was wider than at any time since the sixth century, with much imitation of classical models. However, this confident and innovative culture was ultimately overwhelmed by catastrophe. The period between 1056 and 1082 was one of dire decline. There were military disasters (the worst in 1071 in Asia Minor), followed by the loss of a considerable part of Byzantine territories. There were also internal disturbances and vicious domestic upheavals. Between 1056 and 1081 the struggles for power were conducted by aristocratic clans consisting of ruthless, greedy, but essentially mediocre people, pursuing their selfish, personal interests. The Komnenian dynasty which usurped imperial rule in 1081 had a narrow military and aristocratic

¹ Paul Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, p. 245.

² R. Browning (1981), ref. I.3, p. 10.

outlook, treating the Empire as its family property, 'privatizing' it for its exclusive benefit.³ This excessively autocratic and corrupt regime ended in a second period of disastrous internal upheavals after 1180. There ensued an appalling decline in the quality and powers of government.⁴ This contributed to a monstrous sequence of events ending in the sack and partial destruction of Constantinople by the Western Fourth Crusade (1203–04) and the reduction of the main Byzantine state to a small territory in Western Asia Minor. The ravaging of Constantinople and towns of mainland Greece and the flight to the Greek islands or Asia Minor of many leading Byzantines, especially the senior officials and higher clergy, caused a dispersal of important libraries and destruction of many books. Further losses of both classical and Byzantine literature were caused by two generations of Latin occupation of Constantinople and the more permanent Latin control of parts of mainland Greece. A variety of classical writings, repeatedly cited by Byzantine scholars until 1204, disappear from all records thereafter. It was one of the greatest disasters inflicted upon the ancient Greek cultural legacy.

II

Constantine Psellos (1017–78, monastic name Michael) is the best known scholar of the eleventh century. He left a large body of miscellaneous writings and there survives also considerable correspondence. His partly autobiographical *Chronographia* (976 to mid-1070s) is the most lively and readable of several histories of that time.

The very great modern interest in him is conveyed by N. G. Wilson's remark that "the intellectual history of the eleventh century is dominated by Michael Psellos". A large part of his chapter 8 on

³ The best account of this period and of the nefarious consequences of the Komnenian regime after 1081 is in P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, *étude V*, pp. 290–312.

⁴ Cf. especially L. Halphen, "Le rôle des 'Latins' dans l'histoire intérieure de Constantinople à la fin du XII^e siècle" in his *À travers l'Histoire du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1950), pp. 343–49; J. Herrin, "The collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the Twelfth Century: a Study of a Medieval Economy", *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 12, pt. 2 (1970), pp. 188–203 and "Realities of Byzantine provincial government. Hellas and Peloponessos, 1180–1205", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 39 (1975), pp. 255–84; H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie Politique de l'Empire Byzantin* (Paris, 1975), pp. 88–100; M. F. Hendy (1988), ref. I.8, pp. 46–8.

that century is concerned with Psellos.⁵ His wide curiosity about every branch of learning known to the Byzantines is attractive. He handled the imitation of classical Greek idiom better than most⁶ and this was a major reason for his enduring reputation among later Byzantine writers.

His vanity was boundless and hence his own excessively inflated estimates of his scholarly importance, which have unduly impressed many modern historians. This was not true of P. Lemerle⁷ and I share his insistence that Psellos was a superficial scholar and not representative of the best that Byzantine civilization could achieve. I shall cite later some examples of his ignorance and shallowness. He was, also, during parts of his career a very influential politician, particularly during the reign of his former pupil, the imbecile Michael VII Dukas (1071–78). Psellos's attempts to 'instruct' him in various branches of knowledge form a pathetic end to his scholarly career. His political role was regarded by some leading contemporaries as disastrous. The emperor Romanos Diogenes, on the eve of the terrible defeat of the Byzantines by the Turks at Manzikert (1071), blamed him bitterly for the deplorable condition of the Byzantine state. Psellos was ruthless and cruel as is revealed by the facts that he complacently narrates in his *Chronographia* (below, section IV).

That historical work was, apparently, preserved only in a single manuscript, probably kept in the imperial palace, and we have only one copy of it (ms.Par.gr.1712).⁸ Only a small number of writers connected with the imperial dynasty knew it in the twelfth century. He wrote it mainly as an apology for his very unscrupulous political career.

His departure from the older tradition of greater anonymity was imitated by the few later writers who knew him (especially Anna Komnena, daughter of the emperor Alexios I). This 'individualistic'

⁵ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, pp. 148–79. His comment cited by me is on p. 148.

⁶ C. Mango, *Byzantium. The Empire of the New Rome* (paperback ed., London, 1994), p. 236 and H. Hunger, *Epidosis. Gesammelte Schriften zur Byzantinischen Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte* (München, 1989), IX, p. 140.

⁷ P. Lemerle, ref. I.15 (1977), *étude IV*, pp. 212–21, 243–46 and *étude V*, pp. 256, 262, 296.

⁸ E. Renauld's edition (1926–28), ref. II.17; J. M. Hussey (1935) ref. II.12; K. Snipes, "The scripts and scribes of Parisinus graecus 1712" in D. Harlfinger and G. Prato (eds.) *Paleografia e Codicologia Greca* (Alessandria, 1991), I, pp. 547–48. For the probable date of this manuscript see H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, p. 371.

historiography will become the norm in some of the best writers of the later twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

His vast writings preserve some Greek texts (mainly excerpts), which otherwise might have become lost, but Psellos does not appear to have preserved any works of major importance. If we could date more precisely various scholarly manuscripts that seem to belong to his time, and pierce the anonymity of the men who produced them (cf. section III below), Psellos' vaunted predominance among his scholarly contemporaries might partly disappear.

As a teacher at Constantinople he appears to have been one of the influential figures behind the spread of a special technique of instruction in ancient Greek called 'schedography'.⁹ This consisted of using selected texts, or expressly composing them, in order to illustrate a maximum amount of verbal, grammatical and rhetorical lessons. Anna Komnena (1083–c. 1154), one of the best educated Byzantine aristocrats of her time, regarded it as a recent innovation. She had been subjected to this practice in her own schooling and denounced it bitterly in the last book of her *Alexiad*, the history of her father, Alexios I (1081–1118). In her view, undue concentration on grammar and syntax led to the neglect of the contents of literary works and deterred people from reading the complete writings of the leading Ancient authors. She wrote that she had spent much time on those exercises and

this enrages my mind. . . . When I escaped from these puerile studies and took up rhetoric and applied myself to philosophy, as part of these studies I turned eagerly to the writers of poetry and prose. . . . I recognized the worthlessness of the complexities [of these schedographic exercises].¹⁰

However, Anna was not making sufficient distinction between a variety of practices. Thus, in the second quarter of the twelfth century, Nikephoros Basiliakes, a distinguished scholar, tried to increase the cultural and literary value of this technique of teaching.¹¹ A hey-day of its use will come during the early Palaeologan Renaissance (chapter 11).

⁹ For my sources see section III of the references to this chapter. For schedography in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries see especially P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, pp. 235–41.

¹⁰ Lemerle, *ibid.*, pp. 235–38; R. H. Robins (1993), ref. III.4, pp. 128–29; N. G. Wilson (1970), ref. III.5, p. 75.

¹¹ A. Garzya (1974), ref. III.3, pp. 59–63.

Other men, like Psellos' teacher, John Mauropus (d. soon after 1081), later an archbishop in Asia Minor, were more representative than Psellos of what was best in the spiritual and intellectual life of that age. He was a leading influence behind a decision of Emperor Constantine IX (c. 1047) to impose imperial control over the teaching of law, which hitherto had been left in the hands of private legal practitioners. According to the historian Michael Atteleiates, himself an eminent lawyer, the emperor established "a school of law-givers" and appointed another distinguished scholar, Xiphilinos (a future patriarch of Constantinople) as head of it. It was designed to train future high officials.¹²

John's writings consist of moving poems, religious hymns and sermons.¹³ In one of his poems he begs Christ to exempt from damnation two great pagan writers, Plato and Plutarch, "for in their words and in their ways of life these twain approached most nearly to thy laws". This unconventional admiration for predecessors of spiritual eminence recurs in his praise for Theodoretos, bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria (d. 460).¹⁴ He had been at one time condemned for allegedly heretical views, but Mauropus realized that he had been one of the most humane and noblest prelates. Mauropus "must have been a singularly attractive man, quiet . . . observant, and a lover of nature". Unlike Psellos, easily carried away by superficial rhetoric, Mauropus "gives the impression that he is thinking of the meaning that lay behind whatever he is describing". He had a deep commitment to wide-ranging scholarship. In pursuit of what he valued he could show "an outspokenness unusual in the imperial circle".¹⁵ W. Hörandner summed up his outlook as that of a highly erudite, devout Christian and described him as a man of personal integrity, capable of combining service to the church with an appreciation of human greatness and of the ability of human spirit to achieve distinguished works

¹² J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, pp. 52-4; W. Conus-Wolska, ref. II.2 (1976) and ref. II.3 (1979), pp. 55-8, 101-02.

¹³ For evidence about John see J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, pp. 39-41, 52-4 and her article "The Canons of John Mauropous", *Journal of Roman Studies*, 37 (1947); W. Hörandner, "La poésie profane au XI^e siècle et la connaissance des auteurs anciens" in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 6 (1976), pp. 245-63, *passim*; W. Conus-Wolska, ref. II.2, *ibid.*, pp. 223-30 and J. Lefort, ref. II.14, *ibid.*, pp. 265-303; P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, pp. 197-201, 243-44.

¹⁴ C. G. Bonis, "Worship and dogma. John Mauropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita . . .", *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 1 (1966), p. 4.

¹⁵ J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, pp. 40-41.

at all epochs of history.¹⁶ A fine example of Byzantine Christian humanism at its best, anticipating some of the most attractive figures of the Palaeologan Renaissance, like Maximos Planudes, Georgios Pachymeres and Joseph 'the Philosopher'.

III

Psellos is largely responsible for the opinion that the period before his own time, during the rule of the masterful military emperors between 963 and 1025, witnessed a decline of "good letters". These superb generals certainly did not continue the patronage of scholarly enterprises of Constantine VII (d. 959). Psellos claimed that this absence of imperial patronage for learning still persisted in the time of his youth.¹⁷

A survey of the Byzantine manuscripts which can probably be ascribed to the late tenth century, or the early decades of the eleventh, should disprove the suggestion that there was any notable interruption in the cultivation of classical scholarship. It is true that a vast majority of those *codices* contained religious works.¹⁸ But it must be stressed that the great Cappadocian church fathers of the later fourth century, St. Basil and his brother St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and some of their ecclesiastical contemporaries and successors, especially St. John Chrysostom, were as much part of the classical legacy prized by the Byzantines as were the works of the secular ancient authors, as they wrote in admirable classical Greek. The poems and some other writings of St. Gregory of Nazianzus were the only religious works routinely used in Byzantine schools.

Manuscripts of secular authors are seldom dated. A very regular and highly legible minuscule, called in German *Perschrift* (pearl script) because of its very attractive appearance, can normally be attributed to the later tenth or eleventh centuries.¹⁹ But other more casual hands also existed, with increasing tendencies to link together hitherto separate letters and to introduce other features from cursive, less calligraphic types of writing. A Homer *Iliad* of 1059 (London,

¹⁶ W. Hörandner, *loc. cit.* (1976), p. 263.

¹⁷ J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, p. 37.

¹⁸ Cf. the list of dated manuscripts in R. Devreesse (1954), ref. I.4, pp. 291-97.

¹⁹ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.9, no. I.

British Library, ms. Burney 86) is an example of a precisely dated such manuscript.²⁰ But the proliferation of similar, undated texts imposes caution on attempts at exact chronology.²¹

Homer, of course, continued to be familiar to every educated Byzantine. When Constantine IX introduced for the first time to the court his lovely mistress, Skleraina, one of the courtiers whispered a quotation from Homer, expressing admiration for the beauty of Helen. Most of those present understood the allusion, except for the girl herself.²²

From the middle of the eleventh century we have commentaries on Homer. That of Niketas, a friend and older contemporary of Psellos, contained allegoric Christian interpretations.²³ A fragment of Psellos' lecture on the *Iliad* does the same, combined with much parade of etymological learning and diverse other lore, some of it pure phantasy.²⁴ Homeric commentaries by Eustathios, in the later twelfth century, were to be much more learned and instructive.

Manuscripts of other Ancient secular writers that can be securely attributed to this period are not numerous. Most were the descendants of the earlier first wave of transliterated *codices*, though some fresh transliterating seems to have continued into the eleventh or even the twelfth centuries.

The two earliest minuscule manuscripts of Euripides (of the 'selected' plays) probably both originated in the first half of the eleventh century, the "Jerusalem palimpsest"²⁵ and the Parisian ms.gr.2713.²⁶ No fresh manuscripts of Aeschylus or Sophocles are known between the middle of the tenth century and the period after 1261. Of the two oldest *codices* of Aristophanes, the most famous Athenian comic playwright, one was probably copied in the tenth century (now at Ravenna). It

²⁰ N. G. Wilson in *La Paléographie Grecque et Byzantine, 1^{er} Colloque International*, 1974 (publ. Paris, 1977), pp. 222–23 and R. Devreese (1954), ref. I.4, p. 299.

²¹ N. G. Wilson in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 14 (1973), p. 225.

²² Psellos, *Chronographie*, Renaud (ed.) (1926), ref. II.17, vol. I, p. 146.

²³ See on him P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, pp. 201–2.

²⁴ R. Browning (1975), ref. I.2, p. 25; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, pp. 149–50, 160–61.

²⁵ N. G. Wilson in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 14 (1973), pp. 224–25; G. Zuntz in *Gnomon*, 43 (1971), pp. 84–5.

²⁶ For the date see D. J. Mastronarde and S. M. Bremer, *The Textual Tradition of Euripides' Phoinissai* (Berkeley, 1982), p. 1. There is a facsimile reproduction of this *codex* by J. A. Spranger, *Euripidis quae in codice Parisino greco servantur*, 2 vols., (Florence-Paris, 1938). For its history see E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 94–95.

is the only one of the important *codices* containing all the known eleven comedies. The other may date from the late eleventh century (Venetian ms. Marcianus 474, with seven plays).²⁷ Plutarch (46–120 A.D.), always beloved of Byzantines for his graceful style and elevated moral sentiments, is represented by at least three partial manuscripts of the *Moralia* from the eleventh century and five more from either that century or the next. We have also several eleventh-century manuscripts of his *Lives of the Illustrious Greeks and Romans*. “No other classical author, apart from those occupying a central place in the school curriculum, was so frequently transcribed.”²⁸ This admiration for Plutarch culminated in the 1290s in the efforts of Maximos Planudes to edit all the known writings of Plutarch (chapter 12). Planudes also collected classical and Byzantine epigrams. The largest extant collection of them is in ms. Palatinus Vaticanus gr. 23, copied probably in the second half of the eleventh century. Planudes’ collections of epigrams were derived from a number of manuscripts different from that *codex*.²⁹

Lucian (2nd century A.D.), another favourite of learned Byzantines, is represented by five manuscripts that possibly can be ascribed to the eleventh century, two from the early part of it.³⁰ His satirical poems were repeatedly imitated by Byzantines in the twelfth century. But all this is a meagre collection compared with the great throng of the *codices* of these and other poets and secular prose writers left to us from the early Palaeologan Renaissance.

IV

While Psellos regarded himself as a philosopher, this may not have been the memory of him among some Byzantines. The satirical tale, *Timarion*, dates probably from the first half of the twelfth century. Whoever wrote it belonged to the top group of educated elite. In it Psellos is greeted graciously by a group of ancient philosophers in the Underworld, but they do not regard him as one of themselves

²⁷ K. J. Dover (ed.), *Aristophanes, “Clouds”* (Oxford, 1968), p. cv; A. Diller (1983), ref. IV.7 in my chapter 2, no. 32, pp. 317–18.

²⁸ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, p. 151.

²⁹ R. Aubreton, “La tradition manuscrite des Épigrammes de l’Anthologie Palatine”, *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 70 (1968), pp. 32–81.

³⁰ J. Bompaigne (ed.), *Lucien, oeuvres*, I (Paris, Budé Coll., 1993), pp. xci–xcvii.

and do not invite him to sit with them. He then goes over to a group of sophists (teachers of rhetoric), who welcome him enthusiastically.³¹

Psellos was too superficial, too much lacking in intellectual integrity and too impressed by the miscellaneous, contradictory, philosophical learning he had accumulated (Aristotelian, Platonic, Neoplatonic) to achieve any coherent philosophical synthesis. In his writings rhetoric and love of elegant writing are inextricably mixed with what he regarded as philosophy. As P. Lemerle justly remarked (1977, p. 244), he “was not a philosopher, only curious about it”.³² He was greatly inferior to several much more coherent, scientifically well-informed and more honest philosophical writers active between c. 1260 and 1330, especially George Pachymeres and Joseph the Philosopher (chapter 10).

At times Psellos showed abysmal ignorance about classical history and Ancient philosophical schools. He professed immense admiration for Plato, “the one man of all times who had reached the boundaries of human thought”.³³ But his understanding of Plato’s philosophical background was very superficial. He wrote of Plato as being in contact in Sicily with Stoic philosophers, unaware that Stoicism originated only after Plato’s death. As N. G. Wilson rightly comments, this “is an anachronism which must be regarded as serious even by the low standards to be expected from Byzantines”. In the same treatise he wrote sheer nonsense by making Aristotle accompany Alexander of Macedon on his campaigns and describing him as a master responsible for his victories.³⁴

Psellos appears to have genuinely believed in the need to pursue autonomous philosophical speculation. There are grounds for more scepticism about his assertions that select elements of pagan philosophical thought could help to consolidate Christian doctrines. In a letter to Patriarch Xiphilinos he invoked the leading creators in the fourth century of Byzantine orthodoxy, St. Basil and St. Gregory of

³¹ B. Baldwin (1984), ref. V.1, pp. 30–32 (probable date) and 74.

³² The sources on Psellos are listed in sections 1 and 2 of the references. For adverse comments on Psellos’ learning and personality see E. Stein in *Traditio*, 7 (1949–51), p. 108; J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, p. 44 and ref. I.12 (1950), p. 71; G. Aujac in *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 33 (1975), pp. 274–75: “in Psellos erudition to have killed reflexion”. Above all see P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, *étude IV* and especially pp. 244–45.

³³ M. Sicherl, “Platonismus und Textüberlieferung” in D. Harlfinger (ed.), *Griechische Kodikologie und Textüberlieferung* (Darmstadt, 1980), p. 538.

³⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, pp. 160–61.

Nazianzus. J. Gouillard, the great expert on the religion of Psellos and his "school of philosophers" described this letter as more skilful than sincere.³⁵ I prefer also to suspend judgement about the sincerity of his comment, in a letter to John Mauropus, that

the process of reasoning . . . is neither contrary to the dogma of the Church nor alien to philosophy, but it is indeed the only instrument of truth and the only means of finding that which we seek.³⁶

One can never be assured that Psellos' varied pronouncements on these matters really reflected his inmost beliefs, as he was adept at saying what suited any particular situation. One cannot overlook the monstrous hypocrisies of some of the statements in his historical *Chronographia*. In speaking of the deposition and blinding in 1071 of the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes, in which he himself had played a part, he professed distress at what happened, as it was followed by the speedy death of this ruler from the consequences of such atrocious treatment.³⁷ But Psellos went on to remark "that it must be done" because of "the possibility of sudden changes" of political fortunes of the new emperor, Michael VII!³⁸ Psellos was his leading adviser.

The most important consequence of Psellos' dabbling in ancient philosophy, including especially Platonic doctrines, deemed to threaten Christianity, lay in the discrediting of the teaching at Constantinople of much of ancient philosophy and the virtual cessation in the copying of many of its texts. That was fully reversed only during the early Palaeologan Renaissance. Hence the need to explain this story in some detail.

The main promoter of the attack on the teachings of Psellos (already dead) was the new usurper of the imperial throne (since 1081), Alexios I. His motives were political (below, section V), but the influential allies he was seeking among the leading churchmen were swayed by genuine philosophical and religious anxieties.

Since the sixth century Byzantine theologians had appropriated

³⁵ J. Gouillard (1976), ref. II.9, pp. 316–17.

³⁶ C. Niarchos (1981), ref. II.15, p. 130.

³⁷ B. Leib, "Jean Doukas, César et moine. Son jeu politique à Byzance de 1067 à 1081", *Analecta Bollandiana*, 68 (1950), pp. 165–67.

³⁸ Psellos, *Chronographia* (Renauld ed.), ref. II.17, vol. II, pp. 169–72. The English citations are from the Penguin translation by E. R. A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* (1966), p. 365.

from Aristotle's logical writings a useful legacy of terms and concepts so that his logical works continued to be frequently copied, though some of his doctrines in physical and metaphysical writings, conflicting with Christianity, did cause concern to Orthodox churchmen. Some of the Platonic dialogues were even more disturbing. At an ignorant, popular level we hear in Psellos' time of the monks at the Bithynian monastery of Olympus crossing themselves at every mention of Plato's name.³⁹ Much more serious was the conviction of an important group of ecclesiastics that pagan, especially Platonic and subsequent Neoplatonic doctrines, were undermining essential Christian beliefs. Psellos and his disciples and associates unwittingly provided an opportunity for something that had not happened for centuries: an official condemnation by the Byzantine church of a selection of ancient philosophical doctrines.

For many years, perhaps after 1047, Psellos had been the imperially-appointed "consul of the philosophers". This meant that he would be officially recognised as an outstanding scholar in everything except law and practical disciplines. It involved Psellos in defining his position towards pagan learning. In one of his writings he recognized that while "Hellenic wisdom" was condemnable in its misunderstanding of things Divine and contrary to Christian theology, it had attained, however, the correct understanding of Nature as created by the true God, so that the "theory of Nature" must be sought there.⁴⁰

Psellos adopted as his own a body of philosophical doctrines we call today Neoplatonism, though, like all Byzantines, he took for granted that it was the pure philosophy of Plato.⁴¹ The decisive impulse to treat some of Plato's dialogues (especially the *Parmenides*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*) as representing a coherent body of philosophical doctrine (not regarded as such by Plato himself) came from the teaching of Plotinus (205–70 A.D.). He was the

³⁹ A. Garzya (1974), ref. III.3, no. V, p. 11.

⁴⁰ My paraphrase of a text cited by P. Lemerle (1977), ref. I.15, p. 217, n. 53. For the dignity of the "consul of the philosophers" see *ibid.*, pp. 224–25. For the probable date of Psellos' appointment, *ibid.*, p. 207, n. 30 and p. 223.

⁴¹ My account of the 'Neoplatonic' doctrines espoused by Psellos is based on sources listed in section 2 of the bibliography to this chapter, and, above all, on the writings of E. R. Dodds. On Plotinus see his article ref. II.5 (1950). On the influence of Iamblichos see also P. Hadot in *Revue des Études Grecques*, 74 (1961), p. 427.

last of the outstanding, ancient Greek philosophers, a man of great mental power and integrity. He used statements that he found in Platonic dialogues for expressing in a systematic way his convictions about some of the central problems of philosophy. He was indifferent to the mythical elements in Platonic dialogues, or to their historical context, and selected from them only what he regarded as true and important.

What became a Neoplatonic system, virtually a pagan religion rivalling Christianity, evolved after the death of Plotinus, through the addition of other elements, absent from his predominantly intellectual and non-miraculous philosophical explorations. These new discordant elements were added above all by Iamblichos (d. c. 330). He generalized a practice of treating some of Plato's writings allegorically, which Plotinus had been very reluctant to do. Much more seriously, Iamblichos merged with Plotinian philosophy a body of irrational and magical beliefs wholly alien to Plotinus' authentic teaching. Psellos knew the main sources for the magical beliefs of Iamblichos. We still possess one descendant of Psellos' manuscript of the so-called 'Hermetic' writings (ms.Vat.gr.951),⁴² which included descriptions of mystical unions with pagan gods. He also owned Iamblichos' treatise on the *Egyptian Mysteries*, the most comprehensive Neoplatonic statement of revealed mysteries, containing magic *formulae* for summoning gods to the help of human beings. E. R. Dodds has justifiably described it as a "manifesto of irrationalism, an assertion that salvation is found not in reason but in ritual".⁴³ It is certain that all our copies of this mystifying work descend from a version owned and annotated by Psellos.⁴⁴

Until recently Psellos was also credited with a very strange and repulsive dialogue, "On the operation of the demons". P. Gautier showed in 1980 that this must have been written by a different man, thus removing from the literature on Psellos the most bizarre of the works previously attributed to him.⁴⁵

The most systematic exponent of the Neoplatonic doctrines was Proclus (410–85 A.D.). His *Elements of Theology* were largely incorporated

⁴² A. D. Nock et A. J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum* (Coll. Budé, Paris, 1983), I, p. XVIII.

⁴³ E. R. Dodds (1951), ref. II.6, p. 287.

⁴⁴ M. Slicherl (1960), ref. II.18, p. 18.

⁴⁵ P. Gautier (1980), ref. II.7.

into Psellos' longest philosophical and theological work, usually cited by its Latin title of *De Omnifaria Doctrina*.⁴⁶ Proclus' reputation among the Orthodox Byzantine churchmen was memorably summed up in the *Suda*, that encyclopaedia of Byzantine classical learning, dating from the late tenth century: "that Proclus who had used his impure and insolent tongue against the Christians . . . a man without culture and profound intelligence".⁴⁷ But to Psellos he was "the admirable Proclus" who became "my vast port where I found all the science and exact knowledge of concepts".⁴⁸ He was also attracted to an important element of magical beliefs in Proclus' works.

The magical writings that so attracted Psellos seem to us particularly contrary to Christian beliefs. But to judge from the condemnation of some of his disciples in 1082, four years after his death, the magic elements in his interests were of small significance compared with the threats to central Christian tenets presented by Neoplatonic theological speculations and their roots in ancient pagan philosophy.

V

During the first year of the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (between February and April 1082) a decisive attack was launched on John Italos, a disciple and one of the successors of Psellos as "the consul of the philosophers".⁴⁹ John came from southern Italy (Byzantine), and was regarded as imperfectly instructed in classical Greek, altogether an outsider. This made it easier to break him.

John was intellectually an arrogant scholar, particularly skilled in Aristotelian dialectics. There is an amusing testimonial to his reputation in the satirical *Timarion*, probably dating from the first half of the twelfth century. After a violent altercation in the Underworld with Diogenes the Cynic, John withdraws, groaning, "Aristotle, Aristotle, O syllogism . . . where are you now that I need you?"⁵⁰

Some of John's preserved teachings (*Quaestiones*) give an impres-

⁴⁶ E. R. Dodds (1963), ref. II.4, p. xxx.

⁴⁷ Westerink and Saffrey (1968), ref. II.20, p. CLV.

⁴⁸ E. Renauld (ed.) (1926), ref. II.17, I, p. 136; P. Lemerle (1977) ref. I.15, p. 215.

⁴⁹ The account that follows is based on sources listed in sections I and II of the references to this chapter and, especially on the publications of J. Gouillard.

⁵⁰ B. Baldwin (ed.) (1984), ref. V.1, pp. 72-74.

sion of a man who entered into disputes or theological doctrine mainly in order to display his logical virtuosity.⁵¹ His theological learning seems to have been elementary and superficial. One can appreciate the distaste felt for him by leading theologians among the Byzantine church hierarchy.

The proceedings against him still remain mysterious and were a monument of cynical hypocrisy. They were clearly orchestrated by Alexios. One of the emperor's leading motives was his desire to reassert imperial political control over the church, much undermined during the dynastic upheavals of the preceding years. Alexios' display of Orthodoxy was an element in this. It "was part of his general effort to legitimise his harsh and controversial regime".⁵²

Some of Italos' alleged doctrines, condemned and anathematized, were certainly contrary to what is known about John's views and there was no wish to treat him fairly or truthfully. The condemnation of his disciples was soon revoked. We do not know what happened to John thereafter.

During the synodal trial of Italos one of his alleged heresies was traced to Iamblichos and Proclus "who are the guides of his perdition", an indirect condemnation of Psellos. At the very end of the proceedings Alexios I produced a document identifying John with 'Hellenic' pagan attitudes,⁵³ again an attack on Psellos, though the latter was not named.

The decisions taken against John "have an importance beyond his personality, as a position taken officially by the Church". For the first time since 843 "new extensive doctrinal paragraphs were added" to the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, the collection of anathemas to be read in churches in the course of each year (against John and the "Hellenic errors" on 13 March).⁵⁴

In condemning the alleged teachings of Italos, and the whole philosophical trend initiated by Italos' teacher, Psellos (never named personally), their adversaries were reacting against a type of speculation feared

⁵¹ J. Gouillard (1976), ref. II.9, p. 313.

⁵² The charges against Italos are edited, with a French translation by J. Gouillard (1967), ref. II.8, pp. 56–60. For Alexios' political motives see M. Angold in M. Mullett and D. Smythe, *Alexios I Komnenos*, I (Belfast, 1996), pp. 411–13 and P. Magdalino (1993), ref. I.16, p. 383.

⁵³ J. Gouillard (1985), ref. II.10, pp. 146–47, 166–67.

⁵⁴ J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology. Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, 2nd ed., 1983), p. 63.

as injurious to the doctrinal authority of the church.⁵⁵ It is easy to identify the targets for condemnation. The use of pagan Greek philosophy was prohibited for the exposition of basic Christian doctrines.⁵⁶ A number of philosophical concepts, chiefly Platonic and Neoplatonic, were expressly denounced as destructive of Christian beliefs. This included the excommunication of those who considered that “the Ideas of Plato were true”.⁵⁷ It was an explicit condemnation of Plato’s central philosophical assumption that all material things were only pale reflections of eternal Ideas extant in the mind of a supreme god (or gods). Abuse of logical distinctions in dealing with Christian theology was also condemned and this was clearly directed at some applications of Aristotelian logic.⁵⁸ It included, for example, a prohibition on the use of dialectical arguments in defining the nature of Christ.⁵⁹ The list of errors formulated in 1082 also banned some doctrines that could be deduced from a combination of Platonic and Aristotelian teachings, like the belief in the eternity of the material world or criticism of the dogma of bodily resurrection.⁶⁰

A general distinction was made between those who accept “the foolish opinions of the philosophers” and those who pursue “Hellenic studies for instruction only”.⁶¹ There was no explicit prohibition of the study of Plato or the Neoplatonic writers, but during the entire twelfth century they were under a cloud. It is noticeable that only one *codex* of Plato survives today that can be ascribed to the twelfth century and this contains only the theologically inoffensive *Republic*.⁶²

Aristotelian scholarship escaped much more lightly than Platonic speculations. To Orthodox Byzantine churchmen of that age, Plato, as interpreted by the Neoplatonists, implied a doctrinal stand incompatible with Christianity. But Aristotle continued to be generally considered as a teacher of logic and natural sciences, subjects useful for advanced education. His logical treatises, known collectively as the *Organon*, were appreciated as both religiously neutral and intellectu-

⁵⁵ J. Gouillard (1967), ref. II.8, p. 200.

⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, articles 2 and 10, pp. 56–60.

⁵⁷ J. Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church* (New York, 1983), p. 44 (citing the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, article 8).

⁵⁸ J. Gouillard (1967), ref. II.8, p. 201.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, article 1, pp. 56–57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, articles 4 and 9, pp. 58–59.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, article 7.

⁶² N. G. Wilson, “A list of Plato manuscripts”, *Scriptorium*, 16 (1962), no. 30, on p. 387.

ally indispensable.⁶³ Hence the flowering of a new series of remarkable Aristotelian commentaries in the first half of the twelfth century (below, section VI).

The instigation by Alexios I of the proceedings against John Italos had set a precedent for imperial prosecutions against alleged religious deviations, which will recur during his reign and, again, under his grandson, the emperor Manuel I (1143–80). Most, perhaps all, had underlying motives.

Valuable historical writings were among the masterpieces of Byzantine literature in the twelfth century. We are very interested today in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnena (1083–c. 1154), effectively a biography of her father, Emperor Alexios I, over most of his career (covering the years 1069–1118). But it was almost unknown after her time in medieval Byzantium and is preserved in only a single copy (Paris ms. Coislin gr. 311).⁶⁴

The *Epitome Historion* by John Zonaras (d. after 1161), a chronicle from the creation of the world to his own time,⁶⁵ may have been intended as a deliberate critique of Anna's account of Alexios I. Zonaras is notable for his readiness to criticise aspects of what he regarded as Alexios' misrule. This independent, critical feature had some precedents in earlier Byzantine writers (notably Prokopios) and it will recur in some of the most distinguished, later Byzantine historiography (Niketas Choniates and Pachymeres). Zonaras had been the head of one of the civil courts in Constantinople and was expressing his disenchanted familiarity with Alexios' policies, though he appreciated the emperor's personal qualities. Zonaras' reflections were certainly influenced by his knowledge of some ancient Roman history. He had used books 1–21 of Dio Cassius' *History* (d. after 230 A.D.) covering the story of Roman Republic (now lost to us). Zonaras became convinced that the rise of Roman power was linked with its republican origins. He clearly grasped the distinction between the

⁶³ R. Browning (1977), ref. IV.3 and ref. I.3 (1981), pp. 16–19.

⁶⁴ For the *Alexiad* see J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, pp. 109–10 and H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, pp. 400–408. Editions of the *Alexiad*, ref. IV.1 (1967 and 1969). For Anna see also Ch. Diehl (1927), ref. IV.4 and W. Miller (1921), ref. IV.13.

⁶⁵ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, pp. 416–19; H. G. Beck, *Nomos, Kanon und Staatsraison in Byzanz* (Vienna, 1981), especially p. 29; R. Macrides, "Nomos and Kanon on paper and in court" in R. Morris (ed.), *Church and People in Byzantium* (Birmingham, 1990), pp. 72–73 and n. 56 on p. 72.

republic existing for the preservation of its citizens and the empire constituting a mere property of its ruler, between “the imperial and the common good”. He criticized Alexios I for not treating “the state as common or public property” and for considering “himself to be not its steward but its owner”. These views may have been historically anachronistic in the twelfth century (he wrote after 1143), but they reflected real disquiet among some members of the Byzantine official elite outside the charmed circle of the emperor’s relatives, inordinately pampered by Alexios.⁶⁶ The chronicle of Zonaras became very popular and we have numerous manuscripts.

Anna Komnena, for trying to dethrone and assassinate her brother, Emperor John (1118–43), was confined to a monastery from 1118 onwards, but she retained the wealth that enabled her to exercise scholarly patronage. She encouraged and paid for commentaries on some works of Aristotle that had been largely, or even entirely, neglected by earlier commentators.⁶⁷

Anna had a somewhat eclectic approach to Platonic and Aristotelian doctrines. She had studied Plato’s dialogues, but had a preference for Aristotle, except where he taught things inadmissible to a Christian, like the eternity of the world.⁶⁸

A funeral oration by George Tornikes mentioned her patronage of Michael, Archbishop of Ephesus. But she also probably encouraged commentaries by an older man, Archbishop Eustratios of Nicaea, who had been deprived of his see after mysterious ecclesiastical proceedings against him in 1117.⁶⁹ Anna referred to him in the *Alexiad* as a “brilliant dialectician”.⁷⁰ If we can believe the last (24th) of the charges against him in 1117, he had allegedly taught that throughout the Gospels Christ had used Aristotelian syllogisms.⁷¹ He was certainly a pedantic, boring scholar, insufferably prolix and repetitive.⁷²

For Anna he may have written commentaries on Books 1 and 6

⁶⁶ P. Magdalino (1983), ref. I.16b and ref. I.16a (1993), pp. 404–5; *idem* in ref. V.9, no. VIII (1991), pp. 329–43; M. Angold in Mullet and Smythe (1996), ref. I.17, pp. 400, 414–15 and P. Karlin-Hayter, *ibid.*, pp. 133–4. For the use of Dio Cassius by Zonaras see N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, p. 184.

⁶⁷ R. Browning (1977), ref. IV.3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, no. VII, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7; J. Dräseke (1896), ref. IV.6; P. Joannou (1952), ref. IV.10; A. C. Lloyd (1987), ref. IV.11.

⁷⁰ B. Leib, ed. (1967), ref. IV.1 vol. I, p. CLII.

⁷¹ A. C. Lloyd (1987), ref. IV.11, p. 347.

⁷² P. Moraux (1979), ref. IV.14, p. 6.

of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The preface to book 6 is dedicated to an unnamed princess.⁷³ As far as we know, these were the first commentaries on this treatise written since the learned discussions of it by Aspasios and Adrastios in the second century A.D.⁷⁴ But while we still have the commentary by Eustratios on book I, which had also been studied by Aspasios, Eustratios apparently did not know this work of his predecessor.⁷⁵

Logical commentaries by Eustratios were probably written earlier, and may have been unconnected with Anna. His commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* is valuable because it contains citations of a very important commentary (now lost) on the same treatise by Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. 200 A.D.), one of the outstanding ancient commentators on Aristotle. Eustratios is the last scholar known to have used this commentary.⁷⁶

Michael, Archbishop of Ephesus, was a much more accomplished scholar and he became by far the most efficient Aristotelian commentator of his time.⁷⁷ His commentaries probably originated as courses of instruction given by him to Anna Komnena. This is suggested by a succession of versions of his commentary on the *Sophistici Elenchi* (Sophistic Fallacies). The earliest of them shows all the signs of a hastily prepared work, while a later version is the product of a careful revision.⁷⁸

The number and range of his commentaries was prodigious.⁷⁹ Commentaries where he had ancient and, in some cases, Byzantine predecessors, covered a major part of the logical treatises, the *Physics* and *De Caelo* (both commentaries now missing), a part of the *Metaphysics*, a number of books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, different from those studied by Eustratios, possibly the important treatise *On the Soul* (*De Anima*). Closely connected with this last, now lost, was the collection of nine treatises, called today the *Parva Naturalia*. In Aristotle's own

⁷³ R. Browning (1977), ref. IV.3, no. VII, p. 7.

⁷⁴ P. Moraux, *Aristotelismus bei den Griechen*, II (Berlin-New York, 1984), pp. 249–70, 323–30.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁷⁶ P. Moraux (1979), ref. IV.14, p. 6.

⁷⁷ See especially H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, pp. 34–5 and also K. Praechter (1973 ed.), ref. IV.15, pp. 301–02 and N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, p. 183.

⁷⁸ S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. IV.7, vol. I, pp. 268–72 and vol. III, appendix 4.

⁷⁹ See the list in K. Praechter (1973 ed.), ref. IV.15, pp. 301–02. A large number of them were in the immense collection of commentaries in ms.Laur.85.1, probably of the early fourteenth century. Cf. E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, p. 311.

definition they are “studies of the phenomena common to soul and body”.⁸⁰ Some are pioneer studies of psychology. Only the *De Sensu* (on ‘sense-perception’) is certain to have been commented upon by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Michael’s commentaries on the rest had apparently no known precedents (commentaries on at least eight treatises). Equally unprecedented were commentaries on five zoological treatises (though the one on the vast *Historia Animalium* is now lost). Perhaps the most surprising were the two, now largely lost, commentaries on the *Rhetoric*, not used as a textbook in the Byzantine schools, and on the *Politics*. These are the only known Byzantine commentaries on those two treatises.

Like his Byzantine contemporaries, Michael had “no clear idea . . . what Aristotle ought to be like”.⁸¹ A juster understanding of this was only starting in the fifteenth century. But he was well-acquainted at first hand with the entire range of Aristotelian treatises and he had made careful study of some ancient commentators. Whenever possible, he incorporated materials derived from those earlier commentaries. Justifiably, he particularly admired the writings of Alexander of Aphrodisias, whom in his commentary on *De Motu Animalium* he calls “the truest”.⁸² Citations from Alexander are widely scattered through Michael’s commentaries. Thus in his commentary on the treatise *De Memoria* (*On Memory*) he cites literally the opening sentences of Alexander’s commentary on *De Sensu*.⁸³ Michael discovered that Alexander had written a separate work *On the Soul* and that it was not merely a commentary on Aristotle’s treatise on the same subject. Michael cited long passages from this work of Alexander.⁸⁴

Like Alexander himself, Michael avoided all interpretations of Aristotle based on Platonic influences and was writing from a purely Aristotelian viewpoint. But he did make intelligent use of the writings of Plato and of some Neoplatonic scholars of late Antiquity.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Sir David Ross (ed.), *Aristotle, Parva Naturalia* (Oxford, 1955), p. 1.

⁸¹ S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. IV.7, vol. I, p. 284.

⁸² P. L. Donini (1968), ref. IV.5, p. 318, n. 1.

⁸³ P. Wendland in *Festschrift Theodor Gomperz* (Vienna, 1902), p. 173.

⁸⁴ P. Moraux, *Alexandre d'Aphrodise, Exégète de la Noétique d'Aristote* (Liège-Paris, 1942), p. 19.

⁸⁵ H. F. P. Mercken in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed* (London, 1990), pp. 434–36. There are several references to Plato’s *Republic* in Michael’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Politics* (O. Immisch, 1909, ref. IV.9, *passim*). Also there is a mention

In his commentaries his chief aim was to explain more clearly what Aristotle had been trying to say. He is lucid and helpful. Modern editors pay serious attention to his citations of Aristotle, which provide an indirect tradition earlier than the great majority of our Aristotelian manuscripts.⁸⁶

We do not know of any ancient commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics*. Subjects of autocratic Roman emperors would find little of interest in the study of long-vanished independent city-states. That type of state was even more remote from Byzantine experience. Michael's commentary was a pioneer effort and it is missing from the large collection of Aristotelian commentaries in ms.Laur.85.1 (early 14th century). Michael did not, of course, have either the interest or the information to explain the historical and political background of the *Politics*. But his commentary gave him an opportunity to criticize the evils of his own day.⁸⁷ Perhaps this was a major reason why Anna Komnena wanted such a commentary. Thus, Michael says that Aristotle speaks of some forms of 'perverted' constitutions as "more than ordinarily severe and dominant". Michael added the comment: "this means despotic government, such as the kingship of our own times". This was clearly a reference to the rule of Anna's detested brother, Emperor John II. Against a passage denouncing the corrupt sale of offices, Michael wrote: "that this is most true is proved by the carrion-crows of our own time". Anna presumably regarded her brother's government as grossly corrupt.⁸⁸

All the later Byzantine students of Aristotle used some of Michael's commentaries.⁸⁹ Theodore Metochites, chief minister between c. 1305 and 1328 of Andronikos II, in his paraphrase of one of the *Parva Naturalia* virtually repeated Michael's commentary. The *Encyclopaedia*, of Joseph 'the Philosopher', a friend of Metochites, in his section on psychological and physiological treatises of Aristotle, took over the substance of Michael's commentaries (on *De Memoria* and *De Motu*

of Proclus' commentary on Plato's *Republic* and of one of the speeches of Demosthenes, *ibid.*, pp. 301, 324.

⁸⁶ E.g. Sir David Ross in his editions of the *Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924), I, p. CLXIII (Pseudo-Alexander, really Michael) and of the *Parva Naturalia* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 63-67.

⁸⁷ For *scholia* derived from Michael's commentary see O. Immisch (1909), ref. IV.9, pp. xvi-xx, 295-329.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. xvii-xviii and E. Barker (1959), ref. IV.2, p. 140.

⁸⁹ E.g. S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. IV.7, vol. I, p. 284.

Animalium).⁹⁰ The majority of Michael's commentaries were included in the vast Aristotelian collection of ms.Laur.85.1⁹¹ which, as I shall suggest in chapter 10, was probably assembled in the scriptorium of the palace of Metochites' master, Andronikos II (1282–1328).⁹²

VII

The twelfth century was one of the great ages of Byzantine rhetoric and examples can be still studied in much surviving prose and verse. This abundant literary legacy testifies also to the wide acquaintance with ancient Greek literature among the educated elite. In literary and rhetorical works we find "the strictly and stiffly preserved Attic model". "While only a relatively small part of Byzantine literature is determined by the reproduction of classical contents and subject matter", there is the quasi-universal imitation of the Ancients in citing Greek authors, in making comparisons with mythological figures or heroes of Antiquity.⁹³

One attempt at a Christian drama, "The Passion of Christ", and two satires and parodies offer superb examples. All three are by unknown authors, probably of the twelfth century. *Christus Patiens* exemplifies an equal mastery of Biblical, Christian and classical sources. Of its 2610 lines, a third are borrowed from classical sources, mostly from Euripides and some from Aeschylus.⁹⁴

Lucian continued to be much appreciated. One finds casual references to his works in private letters. Nicholas Kataphloron, a professor in the complex of the patriarchal schools at Constantinople (Master of the Rhetors), writing to a friend who had visited Athens, asked him whether an Altar to Mercy was still to be found there.

⁹⁰ H. J. Drosdaart Lulofs (ed.), *Aristotelis De Insomniis et de Divinatione per Somnum* (Leiden, 1947), p. LXXVII; R. Criscuolo, "Note Sull' *Enciclopedia* del filosofo Giuseppe", *Byzantion*, 44 (1974), pp. 255–56.

⁹¹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, p. 311.

⁹² *Infra*, chapter 10.

⁹³ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.9, no. XV, pp. 18–31. The quotations are from pp. 21 and 30; P. Magdalino (1993), 1. ref. I.16a, pp. 335–39.

⁹⁴ Hunger, pp. 34–6 and no. XVI, pp. 63–5; H. Hunger, (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, pp. 102–04. For a list of classical sources see W. S. Barrett (ed.), *Euripides, Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), p. 77. It survives in a single manuscript, Vat.Pal.gr.367 that may date from the early fourteenth century. Cf. J. Darrouzès, *Litterature et Histoire des Textes Byzantins* (Variorum reprint, 1970), XII, p. 161.

This is a reference to one of Lucian's most humane stories, based on a true fact. His friend, the sophist Demonax, stopped gladiatorial contests at Athens, which a Roman proconsul wished to organize, by telling the Athenians that they would have to demolish first such an altar (really the Altar to Pity), which had stood in the Athenian Agora since the fifth century B.C. This the Athenian assembly refused to do and the proconsul took the hint.⁹⁵

The satire *Timarion* (perhaps of the first quarter of the twelfth century) is one of the most successful Byzantine imitations of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*.⁹⁶ The Underworld in it, to which its hero is mistakenly dragged, is full of ancient personages correctly identified. At its start the hero, Timarion, on returning from Hades is addressed by a friend with quotations from Homer and replies by citations from Homer and Euripides. The author is thus "commencing his subject in a dignified manner", suited to a tragedy.⁹⁷

The "War of Cats and Mice", perhaps written by Theodoros Prodromos (c. 1100–c. 1160),⁹⁸ imitates the "War of Frogs and Mice" (the *Batrachomyomachia*), written perhaps c. 500 B.C., but much altered later. The Byzantines attributed it to Homer and it was present in numerous Homeric manuscripts. This Byzantine version is a very amusing parody of Greek tragedies. "The comical effect emerges mainly from the circumstances that actions, speeches and behaviour typical of gods, heroes and great men in Ancient tragedy are attributed here to small, timid, frightened mice".⁹⁹ There are parodies of heroic speeches of Byzantine emperors and generals before the start of battles, addressed here to the host of mice whose only thought is how to flee back to their mouse holes. Citations from the tragedies of Euripides are cleverly adapted and much of the language is derived from Homer and the comedies of Aristophanes. It should be stressed that our best manuscript (the Venetian Marcianus gr. 524), and the only one that attributes authorship to Prodromos, was copied during the Palaeologan Renaissance, around 1300.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ P. Magdalino (1991), ref. V.9, no. XIV, p. 14. Gilbert Murray refers to this incident in *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 2.

⁹⁶ B. Baldwin (1984), ref. V.1.

⁹⁷ H. F. Tozer, "Byzantine satire", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 2 (1881), p. 243.

⁹⁸ H. Hunger (1968), ref. V.5. Prodromos' authorship is doubted by B. Baldwin (1984), ref. V.1, pp. 33–4.

⁹⁹ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.9, no. XV, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Byzantion* 38 (1968), pp. 576–77.

Michael Italikos, archbishop of Philippupolis in Bulgaria (? dead by 1166) was one of the most learned and attractive Byzantines. His handling of the Western Second Crusade passing in 1147 through his diocese was a model of tact and wisdom. He summed up the importance of rhetoric to his Byzantine contemporaries when he said that its beauty "is unquestionably of the greatest service to men".¹⁰¹ Many of the numerous speeches delivered by scholars and other notables in that age, always modelled on ancient orators, survive today only in manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, testifying to their continued appeal to educated Byzantines.

The philological enterprises of scholars that can be dated to the middle decades or the last quarter of the twelfth century anticipated in many ways the efforts of the Palaeologan scholars. Nikephoros Basilakes (c. 1115–d. after 1182) was a professor at the patriarchal school at Constantinople c. 1140–56 (banished thereafter for political and religious reasons). He was one of its most remarkable teachers.¹⁰² We probably owe to him the rediscovery of the letters of Prokopios of Gaza (c. 465–c. 526 A.D.), the most important of the teachers at the Christian school of rhetoric active there in the early part of the sixth century A.D.¹⁰³ At that time Gaza was one of the leading centres of higher education in the Eastern Empire. The school of Prokopios and his successors played a part of some importance in the adaptation of the ancient pagan education of members of the upper classes to the needs of Christian pupils. The style of Basilakes' prose came to resemble that of Prokopios and the rhetorical exercises of both these teachers consist of a similar mixture, so typically Byzantine, of pagan learning and Christian themes.¹⁰⁴ In several *codices* the writings of Prokopios occur alongside the works of Basilakes. The Byzantine scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries regarded both as valuable models of rhetorical teaching and their writings continued to be copied in manuscripts dating from those years.

Eustathios (b. c. 1115, d. 1195/97), archbishop of Thessalonica by 1179, came nearest in that age to personifying the Byzantine ideal

¹⁰¹ J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, p. 115. For Michael see R. Browning (1977), ref. V.2, pp. 194–97.

¹⁰² R. Browning (1977), *ibid.*, pp. 181–84; six articles in A. Garzya (1974), ref. IV.4.

¹⁰³ A. Garzya and R. J. Loenertz (eds.), *Procopii Gazae Epistolae et Declamationes* (Ettal, 1963).

¹⁰⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 356–57 and 403.

of scholar and prelate.¹⁰⁵ His devoted friend, Michael Choniates, said of him in a funeral oration "that he made Greek philosophy the servant of the divine Christian wisdom",¹⁰⁶ a good description of the Byzantine conception of what a Christian humanist should be doing.

R. Browning justifiably speaks of Eustathios as "austere, humane, the soul of kindness . . . able to meet with dignity any emergency from an imperial visit to the capture and sack of his city"¹⁰⁷ (in 1185). His autobiographical narrative of this Norman capture of Thessalonica, his speeches and letters, all convey his fairness, tolerance, sense of justice and genuine interest in the lives of the ordinary Byzantines. This needs stressing to give a balanced image of Eustathios, as his commentaries on classical works, especially his gigantic commentaries on the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, leave a less attractive impression on a modern reader, though even there we find glimpses of his fascinating personality. He did handle his enormous learning "with charm and humanity".¹⁰⁸

His non-scholastic writings belie all platitudes about the remoteness of leading Byzantine scholars from ordinary life.¹⁰⁹ His account of the siege, capture and sack of Thessalonica by the Normans in 1185, written very soon afterwards, is one of the masterpieces of Byzantine historiography. He is unsparing in his condemnation of the emperor Andronikos I whom he blames for the Norman attack, and scathing in his denunciations of David Komnenos, the governor of the city, for his failure to prepare for the possible disaster, his utter incompetence and cowardice. He gives graphic descriptions of the horrors that befell the inhabitants.¹¹⁰

Eustathios had strong views about other evils besetting the Byzantine society. He was appalled by the decline of Christian ideals in monasteries.¹¹¹ He was even more harshly condemnatory of the corruption

¹⁰⁵ The more important sources on him are listed in section V of the references to this chapter. To these should be added N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, pp. 196–204; A. Kazhdan and S. Franklin (1984), ref. I.13, pp. 115–95; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. 1, pp. 132–36 and 159–60 (further information on the history of his autograph copies of the commentaries on Homer).

¹⁰⁶ J. M. Hussey (1937), ref. I.11, pp. 106–07.

¹⁰⁷ R. Browning (1964), ref. I.1, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ R. J. H. Jenkins, "Hellenistic origins of Byzantine literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), p. 49.

¹⁰⁹ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.9, no. XVI, pp. 66–7, 71–2.

¹¹⁰ S. Kyriadikis (1961), ref. V.7; H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.10, no. XVI, pp. 66–7; A. Kazhdan and S. Franklin (1984), ref. I.13, pp. 136–37.

¹¹¹ Kazhdan and Franklin, *ibid.*, pp. 150–55.

rife in the Byzantine civil service and the resultant abuses and injustices. The imperial bureaucracy and the mob leaders at Constantinople were the main supporters of Andronikos I, whose reign of terror against the aristocracy was outspokenly condemned by Eustathios.¹¹² Such readiness to denounce corruptions and injustices was a recurrent trait of some of the best leaders of the Byzantine church and I shall return in the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328) to the example of Patriarch Athanasius (below, chapter 6).

Eustathios' most important scholarly achievements were the two huge commentaries on the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He tried to collect in them all the statements that could be found in ancient *scholia* and anything else that had been said about the two epics. We have two, mainly autograph, copies for each of those commentaries.¹¹³ We have to wait a century to find comparable acquaintance with such an immense range of Ancient classics in Maximos Planudes.¹¹⁴

A commentary that requires seven printed pages of large format to discuss the first five words of the *Iliad*, and cites in the process more than twenty ancient writers, must often have left Eustathios' students bewildered, though he claimed that it was at their request that he had written it. It is best explained as the application of the methods of Byzantine schedography to the entire texts of Homer's epics.¹¹⁵ Some of the arguments of Eustathios, such as his attempt to deny that the *Odyssey* is full of unhistorical myths, are little short of nonsense.¹¹⁶

However, there are some attractive features as well. The touches of realism and of interest in every day life recur in the Homeric commentaries. Eustathios tried to describe the feelings that Homer wished to evoke in his readers. He does so on occasion sensitively and charmingly as, for example, in the passage in the *Iliad* describ-

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 155–56.

¹¹³ M. Van der Valk (1971–79), ref. V.10; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 134–36 (for autograph copies).

¹¹⁴ The authors known to Eustathios are listed in H. Erbse, "Untersuchungen zu den Attizistischen Lexika", *Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 1949, no. 2 (published Berlin, 1950), pp. 3–4.

¹¹⁵ P. Browning (1964), ref. I.1, pp. 15–6; K. Nickau's review of Van der Valk's edition in *Gnomon*, 56 (1984), ref. V.10, p. 682.

¹¹⁶ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.18, pp. 198–99.

ing the parting of Hector from his wife, Andromache, before Hector goes to the fatal battle that will cause his death.¹¹⁷

P. Maas, one of the outstanding classical scholars of this century, estimated highly Eustathios' ability to produce intelligent and plausible textual emendations. Maas regarded him as the one worthy Byzantine precursor of the leading scholars of the early Palaeologan Renaissance.¹¹⁸ This view is based partly on the discussion of Eustathios' possible emendations of the satirical *Deipnosophistae* by Athenaeus, an immensely learned author (? after 228 A.D.). It is an invaluable storehouse of citations from a very wide range of ancient works, now lost, especially comic writers.¹¹⁹

The original work in thirty books was reduced to an *epitome* in fifteen books. At some unknown date this *Epitome* was reduced to a still shorter digest and Maas has argued that this was done by Eustathios. He is certainly the first scholar known to have used this shorter version. Eustathios cites it in his Homeric commentaries more often than any other text and this is, perhaps, one of the strongest arguments for his authorship of it. This second, shorter summary contains a number of remarkable textual improvements which provide the chief argument for Maas' high estimate of him as a conjectural textual critic.

VIII

The fullest account of the decades preceding the disastrous destruction of the old Byzantine state by the Fourth Crusade (final capture of Constantinople in April 1204) is in the *History* of Niketas Choniates (c. 1155–c. 1215).¹²⁰ It begins effectively with the death of Alexios Komnenos in 1118. Between c. 1195 and 1204 he was one of the

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 198 and R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Hellenistic origins of Byzantine literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), p. 49.

¹¹⁸ "Eustathios aus Konjekturealkritiker" in ref. V.8, pp. 505–20.

¹¹⁹ A. M. Desrousseaux and Ch. Astruc (eds.), *Athénée de Naucratis, Les Deipnosophistes* (Coll. Budé, Paris, 1956), vol. I, pp. vii–xix.

¹²⁰ The main sources are listed in section VI of the references to this chapter. See also H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.10, vol. I, pp. 429–41; A. P. Kazhdan (1983), ref. V.6, chapter 3 ("Niceta Coniata") and A. P. Kazhdan and S. Franklin (1984), ref. I.13.

heads of the imperial civil service at Constantinople, though he does not appear to have had much political power.

Choniates is a very valuable source for the second half of the reign of Manuel I (1143–80), though at times less factually reliable than his predecessor, Kinnamos, who, unlike Choniates, spent several years in Manuel's service. Kinnamos wrote a deliberate panegyric of Manuel, while criticisms of that very impressive but megalomaniac emperor run right through the narrative of Choniates. In its style and rich vocabulary Choniates' *History* is one of the greatest literary masterpieces of Byzantine historiography.

As a historian, Choniates, like Eustathios, was a blunt realist and tried to be objective and rational in his explanations of events. He is one of the most original Byzantine writers, combining elements of Byzantine tradition, especially love of the classics and sincere Christian devoutness, with rare independence of judgement, unusual broad-mindedness and hatred of cruelty, which he castigated as unchristian. Like Zonaras, one of his sources for the reign of Alexios I, Choniates was ready to expose the abuses of the imperial government. He did not spare his fellow civil servants, denouncing their corruption, greed, incompetence and ignorance.

Even more forcibly than Zonaras, he criticized the excesses of imperial absolutism. He did so initially while speaking of the rule of Manuel I, though he praised Manuel's many remarkable qualities. P. Magdalino, the latest of Manuel's historians, urges that some of Manuel's policies, criticized by Choniates, may deserve a more balanced appreciation. But it is important to know that an influential group of Byzantines was dismayed by the excesses of the imperial autocracy and especially its fiscal oppressiveness. In later chapters I shall return to the importance of comparable critiques in later historians, especially Pachymeres and Gregoras.

Choniates believed, of course, in the ideal imperial system, "but disagreed fundamentally with the way that system was run". He described Manuel as feeling threatened by the more distinguished of his subjects. Emperors like him "take arms against the Divinity, plucking out all good men from the crowd and slaughtering [them] . . . so that they may . . . have the public finances all to themselves . . . to do with as they please, and treat free men as slaves and behave towards men who are sometimes worthier to rule than they as if they were hired servants . . . having lost their reason under the influence of power". Introducing the section where he described

Manuel's interference in church affairs, Choniates depicted him as behaving as if he were an "unerring expert in all human and divine affairs".¹²¹

Choniates was justifiably even more outspoken about the inadequacies of all the successors of Manuel I between 1180 and 1204 and dwelt on the profound weaknesses of the Byzantine state during that period of dangerous decline, bordering on disintegration. He wrote the major part of his history up to 1202 before the invasion by the Fourth Crusade in 1203–4, but it is permeated by forebodings of some impending disaster.

Niketas Choniates, in his history, and his brother Michael, Archbishop of Athens, in his letters, supply plentiful evidence of Constantinople having become a malignant parasitical capital of an increasingly moribund state, with the emperors and their officials pitilessly exploiting the provincial populations, but showing indifference to the lawlessness and increasing impoverishment of Byzantine lands. Hence the passivity of the provincial populations in the face of the attack by the Fourth Crusade on Constantinople in 1203–4. There were no attempts from outside to come to its help and, as Choniates reports, after its capture the provincial populations showed open hostility to the notables fleeing from it. They jeered at these miserable fugitives that there was now equality between the perennial sufferings and oppressions endured by the ordinary Byzantines and the destitution of those notables.¹²²

Niketas blamed both the Westerners and the Byzantines for escalating hatreds between Catholic Europe and the Byzantine state, but did not stress the religious differences as a major cause of enmity, which is very instructive. He was the eye-witness of the events at Constantinople from the arrival of the crusading fleet within sight of the Byzantine capital in June 1203 to its final capture by the crusaders in April 1204.¹²³ He showed great courage in rescuing a captive Byzantine girl.

This part of his narrative ended with a list of 18 bronze statues, including some famous masterpieces surviving from antiquity, which

¹²¹ P. Magdalino (1983), ref. I.16b and *idem* (1993), ref. I.16a, pp. 4–26.

¹²² H. Ahrweiler, *op. cit.* (1975), pp. 91–98.

¹²³ For the damage at Constantinople during that period, through a number of disastrous fires and destructions by the crusaders, see A. M. Talbot in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), pp. 243–45.

the Western crusaders melted for coinage, or which were otherwise destroyed.¹²⁴ Niketas managed ultimately to flee to western Asia Minor and he produced there a revised version of his *History*, carrying it on until 1206. Several manuscripts of it were copied and it was used by some of the later Byzantine historians.

There is no list of ancient manuscripts lost at Constantinople or elsewhere in Greece to parallel Niketas' account of the destruction of artistic treasures. Evidence about the later fate of 'some *codices* known to have been kept originally at the imperial palace points to the dispersal of the palace library. Thus, a large collection of rare military treatises commissioned by Emperor Constantine VII in the middle of the tenth century, and almost certainly written in his palace scriptorium, was most probably plundered in 1204. It surfaced again only in 1491 when it was purchased for Lorenzo de' Medici in an obscure, provincial Greek town.¹²⁵

"The greatest poet that the Hellenistic age produced, and . . . one of the most important figures in the development of Graeco-Roman (and hence European) literature" was Callimachus of Cyrene (active in Egypt *c.* 280–*c.* 245 B.C.). He was a poet of great human sensitivity and charm, witty and ironic, superbly sophisticated in both content and language, as well as one of the greatest scholars of Hellenistic Alexandria. That meant that his poetry was steeped in echoes of all the earlier Greek literature.¹²⁶

Two of his most fascinating and influential poems were among the grievous casualties of the disasters of 1204. They are now known to us only from scattered fragments, though papyri are continuously yielding an increasing number of them. The *Aetia*, or *Origins*, consisted of four books of verse. "This was an immensely rich and original work . . . representing the labour of almost the poet's whole career as a writer". It had massive influence on leading ancient poets, Roman as well as Greek. The other lost poem was the *Hecale*, a work of poignant, humane sensitiveness as well as great unconventionality. The *Aetia* was known to some leading Byzantine scholars down to 1204 and so was the *Hecale*, at least in paraphrase. They

¹²⁴ V. Grecu (1948), ref. VI.4; C. Mango, "Antique statuary and the Byzantine beholder" in his *Byzantium and its Image* (London, 1984), no. V, p. 68.

¹²⁵ A. Dain et J. A. de Foucault, "Les stratégistes byzantins", *Travaux et Mémoires*, 2 (Paris, 1967), pp. 382–85.

¹²⁶ A. W. Bulloch in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature, I, Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 549–69.

were the favourite reading of Michael Choniates, Archbishop of Athens, brother of the historian Niketas. His copies perished in the destruction of his library, after the Frankish conquest drove him out of his diocese. Other copies must have perished too, for no Byzantine ever cited them thereafter. The same fate befell almost all the epigrams of Callimachus.¹²⁷ Other Greek literature which vanished then appears to have included some of Pindar's poetry.¹²⁸ Only one of the surviving *codices* of Pindar may be earlier than 1204 (ms. Vat. gr. 1312, perhaps of late twelfth century).¹²⁹ We do not know how much more of Ancient Greek literature was lost then. The greater part of the vast Byzantine rhetorical literature of the twelfth century vanished "in the resultant disruption of cultural life and education".¹³⁰

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE NICAEAN EMPIRE UNDER THE LASKARIDS, 1204–58

I

The capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade essentially marked the end of the Byzantine Empire as a recognisable survivor of the ancient world.¹ The whole machinery of its government depended on central control exercised from the capital. With its disappearance, and the dispersal of its central bureaucracy, all the services of the state largely disintegrated. The territories of the Empire were split into a multitude of fragments. There was the new “Latin Emperor” at Constantinople, while the various French, Netherlandish and Italian nobles, who had led the Crusade, tried to appropriate portions of territory which they would hold henceforth in a very loose allegiance to this feudal overlord. The Venetians acquired three-eighths of Constantinople and such bits of mainland Greece and the Greek islands as would safeguard their essential commercial interests. In what the Latins or the Venetians failed to control, a multitude of Greek notables tried to secure lordship, competing viciously with each other as well as with the foreign conquerors. As Niketas Choniates bitterly complained, these Byzantine potentates were driven by boundless ambition and their conflicting enterprises made impossible any common resistance against the Latins.²

Gradually there emerged out of this chaos some reconstituted, larger Greek states, controlled by men from leading Byzantine families connected with former ruling dynasties.³ Along the coast of north-eastern Asia Minor there emerged the Empire of Trebizond ruled by two grandsons of the former Byzantine Emperor, Andronikos I (1183–85), and under the protection of the Caucasian kingdom of

¹ M. F. Hendy (1988), ref. II.9, no. III, p. 42.

² H. Ahrweiler (1965), ref. II.2, p. 301.

³ My account of what happened after 1204 is based on publications listed in sections I and II of the references to this chapter.

Georgia. At the other end of the former Empire, in the north-western corner of mainland Greece, an illegitimate member of the Angelos family, likewise formerly emperors (1185–1204), set up the state of Epiros, which rapidly extended eastwards into Thessaly. Neither of these states would ever rejoin again the main Byzantine Empire (though Thessaly did).

The greatest future was reserved for a third state, in the north-western corner of Asia Minor, which historians have been accustomed to call the Empire of Nicaea, from its first capital, though in the early thirteenth century contemporaries called it Anatolia⁴ (from the usual name given to Asia Minor). It was the creation of Theodore Laskaris, son-in-law of a former emperor, Alexios III. Theodore had escaped from Constantinople before its final capture by the Latins.⁵ In the spring of 1205 he got himself proclaimed as the new ruler at Nicaea. Early in 1208 he procured the appointment of a new patriarch of the Byzantine church, in exile from Constantinople, and his nominee, Michael Autoreianos, who was conspicuously loyal to Theodore, crowned him (March–April, 1208). Only then did Theodore begin to style himself emperor.

Gradually the Greek population of western Asia Minor rallied to Theodore, as did many Byzantine notables, who had managed to escape from Greece. The defeats inflicted by the Bulgarians on the most important Latin leaders, the first Latin Emperor, Baldwin (1205) and Boniface of Montferrat (1207), both of them killed, were decisive in giving a breathing-space to the rulers of the new Byzantine principalities “in which to transform what had been simply centres of resistance to the Latins into veritable states”.⁶

The survival of the Nicaean Empire was decisively assured in the first half of 1211 through Theodore’s crushing victory over the army of Seljuk Turks, whose state lay in eastern and central Asia Minor. Thereafter the Anatolian frontier of the Nicaean state remained fairly stable and was protected by a very effective system of defences.⁷ The Seljuk Sultanate ceased to be an independent entity after the Mongols,

⁴ H. Ahrweiler (1965), ref. II.2, p. 302 and n. 7; F. Thiriet (1959), ref. II.14, p. 99, n. 1.

⁵ N. Oikonomides (1992), ref. II.12, no. XX, pp. 23–25.

⁶ M. Angold (1975), ref. II.5, p. 12.

⁷ N. Oikonomides (1967), ref. II.11; S. Vryonis (1971), ref. II.15, pp. 130–32; M. C. Bartusis (1992), ref. II.6, pp. 24–6.

invading from the east, annihilated its army in 1243. Fortunately for the Nicaean state, the Mongols saw no need to extend their conquests to it.⁸ This enabled the Nicaean Empire to concentrate on the recovery of parts of mainland Greece, beginning with the conquest of a part of Thrace in 1224. In 1246 Thessalonica was recovered (the second most important Greek city after Constantinople). By the death in 1254 of the emperor John III Batazes most of Thrace and much of Macedonia was under Nicaean control.⁹ It became only a matter of time before the impoverished Latin emperors of Constantinople, with their authority restricted to a continuously diminishing area, were driven out.

II

The Nicaean Empire covered only the western regions of Asia Minor, but they were the most fertile, densely populated and prosperous parts of it.¹⁰ They assured sufficient revenues for its government and enabled it to sustain an elite of lay and ecclesiastical refugees who had fled from Constantinople. A large number of men of wealth and good education abandoned that city after the Latin conquest and provided the Nicaean state with its military commanders, its experienced officials and its higher clergy.¹¹ Many of those men had been and remained patrons of learning. They continued to be devoted to the study and preservation of ancient Greek and Byzantine cultural achievements. The three successive emperors between 1204 and 1258 were pre-eminent in encouraging the good education essential for the recruitment of an adequate higher officialdom. Theodore II (1254–58) was, indeed, himself a considerable scholar.

A network of good secondary schools existed both at Nicaea and at a number of lesser provincial centres, teaching the traditional disciplines of rhetoric, logic and other parts of the customary secondary

⁸ C. Cahen (1968), ref. II.7, pp. 138, 269.

⁹ Bartusis (1992), ref. II.6, pp. 23, 32.

¹⁰ H. Ahrweiler (1958–59), ref. II.1 and (1965), ref. II.2; M. F. Hendy (1985), ref. II.8.

¹¹ H. Ahrweiler, ref. II.1 and ref. II.2; A. M. Talbot in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), pp. 245–46 (exodus of notables from Constantinople in 1203–4 and later).

Byzantine curriculum.¹² Able young men from Greek territories outside the Nicaean realm came to Nicaea in search of this education, like George Akropolites, the future leading statesman and scholar, who was sent by his parents from Constantinople in 1233, or the future Patriarch Gregory (1283–89), who came to Ephesus from Venetian Cyprus in 1259.¹³

Shortage of suitable books appears to have presented a serious problem.¹⁴ Few manuscripts of classical authors or of Byzantine writers can be shown with certainty to have been copied in the Nicaean state,¹⁵ though more must have originated there. Our inability to date thirteenth-century scripts precisely and the general absence of concrete evidence partly explain our inability to ascribe more *codices* to this period and to locate their origin in the Nicaean territory. In the list drawn up by G. Prato of precisely dated manuscripts,¹⁶ the overwhelming majority are ecclesiastical. Only seven are of secular authors. Three of those are rhetorical manuals and two are copies of a new dictionary of classical words that may have originated in the first half of the thirteenth century.¹⁷ One contains the world chronicle of Zonaras and one, besides theological works of John of Damascus, also comprises Porphyry's *Introduction* to the logical writings of Aristotle.

More can be learnt from a few undated *codices* that seem to have originated in the Nicaean state. Of particular interest is a *codex*, now at the Bodleian library at Oxford, ms. Barocci 131. It is a large collection of Byzantine texts, chiefly of writers active in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including a variety of works of Psellos. It is a witness to a desire to preserve as much as possible of the Byzantine legacy of the previous two centuries and particularly the writers and orators of the Comnenian period.¹⁸ N. G. Wilson has identified a few further manuscripts of classical authors that may belong to this time and place, but it is a very meagre list.¹⁹

¹² The most detailed account is in C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. III.1 (chapter 1).

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵ G. Prato (1981), ref. III.5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–18.

¹⁷ For the so-called *Lexicon of Zonaras*, see N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. III.10, p. 221.

¹⁸ N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. III.8. See also W. Horändner, "Prodromos—Reminiszenzen bei Dichtern der Nikänischen Zeit", *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 4 (1972).

¹⁹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. III.10, pp. 219, 225.

Nikephoros Blemmydes (1197–c. 1272) through his autobiography, written in the last decade of his life, is the best known scholar of the Nicaean period.²⁰ He was regarded by his contemporaries as highly learned and an outstanding teacher and in 1240 the emperor John III Batatzes, the ablest of the Nicaean rulers (1222–54), appointed him as tutor to his son and heir, the future emperor Theodore II. He remained in close contact with his former pupil until Theodore's death in August 1258, though he declined in 1255 the nomination to become the patriarch of Nicaea. His surviving writings reveal familiarity with the traditional branches of Byzantine higher learning, but N. G. Wilson was right to describe him as a 'limited' man and to remark that what we know of him does not justify "an enthusiastic judgement on the achievements of Nicaean scholars".²¹

The most influential scholarly writings of Blemmydes were two treatises composed for his pupils summing up essential teaching of Aristotle on logic and on 'physical' sciences. The one on logic was started at the request of Theodore II (thus by 1258) and the 'physical' treatise seems to have followed later. They were, however, intended as a single combined work and survive together in numerous manuscripts.²²

N. G. Wilson correctly describes them as an unoriginal compilation from Aristotle and the standard commentators,²³ but this is an unduly dismissive comment. The work is revealing about what would be regarded by contemporaries as a useful school manual. The logical treatise starts "with the assertion that logic is very helpful towards the understanding of scripture".²⁴ Byzantine theology did, indeed, rely on Aristotelian logical terms and definitions. Both treatises, while rephrasing and summarizing earlier materials, do so with clarity and intelligence.

In summarizing Aristotelian treatises he clearly had before his eyes Aristotle's writings. He also used ancient Aristotelian commentaries and made intelligent choices among them: they included Alexander's Commentary on the *Meteorologica* and Simplicius on the *Physics* and *De Caelo*. Occasionally he introduced corrections of his own, which

²⁰ Editions of the autobiography (two successive versions) by A. Heisenberg (1896) and J. A. Munitz (1984, 1988), in ref. I.4.

²¹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. III.10, pp. 221–23.

²² W. Lackner (1972), ref. III.4.

²³ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. III.10, p. 222.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

he clearly indicated. The one weakness of the 'physical' treatise was his inability to distinguish genuine Aristotelian writings from later, apocryphal accretions, but this was the common fault of the entire Byzantine scholastic tradition.²⁵

The work became a very popular Byzantine textbook. It started a new practice of writing not commentaries on Aristotle's texts, word by word, but clear and helpful summaries. This came to be followed by abler men, active in the reign of Andronikos II, especially George Pachymeres and Joseph, the Philosopher.

The hostility to much of the ancient philosophy, because it should be of no interest to devout, Orthodox Christians, a hostility which had reached its climax at the end of the eleventh century, was abating among the scholars of the Nicaean period. Blemmydes discussed with moderation even those doctrines of Aristotle, like the eternity of the world, which were unacceptable to Christians. He stated them fairly, even if he had to condemn them.²⁶ This new attitude would bear abundant fruit during the early Palaeologan Renaissance.

In a letter to Blemmydes his former pupil, the emperor Theodore II (1221–58, ruler 1254–58), called him the reviver of traditional higher education.²⁷ Theodore did himself become an erudite scholar, though this contributed to his arrogant conviction of intellectual superiority. His father, John III Batatzes, had been exceptionally prudent in dealing with his leading subjects, avoiding any excessive flaunting of the imperial dignity and handling his finances with economy and efficiency.²⁸ Theodore's brief rule proved internally disastrous. He was an unstable man, suffering from epilepsy, and was "pathologically suspicious", of the Byzantine aristocracy around him. He wanted to base the imperial power predominantly on the native population of Western Anatolia and to recruit a largely Greek army from among them. Some of the overmighty aristocrats, and the foreign mercenaries whom they commanded, felt seriously menaced and this ensured that, within nine days of his sudden death, leading aristocrats procured the assassination of the regent designed for his young

²⁵ E. B. Fryde (1996), as cited in chapter 2 (ref. II.5), vol. I, pp. 279–80.

²⁶ W. Lackner (1972), ref. III.4, pp. 166–67.

²⁷ N. Festa (1898), ref. I.3, letter 2, p. 4.

²⁸ R. J. Macrides, "From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologi: imperial models in decline and exile" in P. Magdalino (ed.), *The New Constantines* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 281.

son, the emperor John IV and the proclamation as co-emperor of Michael VIII Palaiologos, the most ambitious and dangerous of those threatened notables.²⁹

To return to Theodore II. He certainly had a very high esteem for learning. In his "Praise of Nicaea" he compared it to the ancient 'golden' Athens. Before he had become emperor he wrote a treatise on things that should be said about the world. It is a complex and rather confusing combination of theology, cosmology and Greek philosophy. We still possess a manuscript containing Aristotle's *Physica* and *De Caelo* annotated by Theodore.³⁰

Though our evidence does not add up to a particularly distinguished level of education and scholarship in the main cultural centres of the Nicaean Empire, its teachers and scholars did preserve the main elements of Byzantine traditional learning. The men educated in the Nicaean Empire did train the next generation of remarkable scholars active during the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328). We should, therefore, give more credit to the scholars of the later years of the Nicaean period than modern historians have been accustomed to do.

III

The official ideology of the Byzantine Empire down to 1204 could be defined as the combination of two main beliefs.³¹ It was the continuation of the Roman Empire of antiquity, the only supreme state in existence. It did not identify itself with any particular people and regarded as natural its rule over many different populations, speaking a variety of languages. The only unifying feature was that all its subjects were supposed to be Orthodox Christians. Hence the constant pre-occupation with maintaining one correct Christian creed and the repression of all 'heretical' deviations. The Byzantine Emperors were the only earthly rulers whose authority came from God. As

²⁹ M. Angold (1975), ref. IV.3, p. 79; D. J. Geanakoplos, "The Nicene revolution of 1258 and the usurpation of Michael VIII Palaeologus", *Traditio*, 9 (1953), pp. 420–30; H. Ahrweiler (1975), ref. II.4, p. 37 and p. 113.

³⁰ Hunger, (1973), ref. III.3, pp. 128–37; G. Prato (1981), ref. III.6.

³¹ This section is mainly based on publications listed in section IV of the references to this chapter.

long as they and their subjects obeyed God, they would be protected by Him.

The disasters of 1204 rudely shattered the claims of the Byzantine Emperors to be the only universal rulers. Some Byzantines also believed that what had happened then was God's punishment for their sins.³² The Nicaean Emperors looked to the Orthodox churchmen of their territory to sanctify anew their rule. Orthodox religion was to them the political force of the highest order. They justifiably looked to the elite of their churchmen to organize their people with efficiency and to be the most effective propagandists for their unquestioned authority.³³

Something else also began to happen. For the first time in Byzantine history the stress on the 'Hellenic' nature of its traditions began to be asserted with some frequency as a justification for the claims of the Nicaean Empire to be superior to other states. Hitherto the Byzantines had invariably called themselves 'Romans'. The traditional meaning of 'Hellenes' was in accordance with Greek New Testament usage, namely 'pagans'. In later antiquity it was still the term used for non-Christianized inhabitants of more distant countryside and the usage persisted of dubbing other non-Christian peoples as 'Hellenes', though they might have had no connexion whatsoever with Greeks.

In the later twelfth century there were the beginnings of a change towards using 'Hellenic' as something to be equated with what was distinctive and glorious about the Byzantines.

The growing confrontation between the Byzantine East and the Latin West made the Byzantines more conscious of their links with Greek Antiquity and the privileged position in which their possession of the Greek language placed them.³⁴

The pride in 'Hellenism' was immensely reinforced by the capture of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade. This "shattered Byzantine confidence in their historical destiny" as God's Chosen Empire.³⁵ Something new was needed to revive the belief in their unquestioned superiority. Some subjects of the Nicaean Emperors found it in their

³² G. G. Arnakis in *Speculum*, 37 (1962), p. 95.

³³ E.g. see N. Oikonomides (1967), ref. II.11.

³⁴ R. Browning (1989), ref. IV.6, p. 124.

³⁵ P. J. Alexander (1962), ref. IV.2, p. 340.

strengthened sense "of ethnic and cultural identity with its twin marks of Hellenism and Orthodoxy".³⁶ There was also the need to express their sense of distinctness from the Latins, whose conduct at Constantinople in 1203–4 made them utterly detested. The reconquest, one day, of Constantinople, from those "rabid dogs", as the historian Niketas Choniates called the Latins in a speech before the emperor Theodore I, became at once the main aim of Nicaean policy.³⁷ "Hellenic tradition" came to distinguish the Byzantines from their fellow Christians in the west as well as in the Slavonic world and, of course, from Jews, Muslims and other 'pagans'.³⁸ The rediscovery of 'Hellenism' as the glorious feature of the Byzantine civilization became a recurrent theme of Nicaean history. In one of his letters, Theodore II spoke of that part of his army which had been recruited from among his Anatolian subjects as 'Hellenic', as opposed to the foreign mercenaries.³⁹ Nikephoros Blemmydes called the Nicaean Empire "the sceptre (or crown) of the Hellenes" (*ta ton Hellenon skeptra*).⁴⁰ The other Greek states that rejected the claims of the Nicaean rulers were denied the right to call themselves Hellenes. The historian George Akropolites, whose youth was spent at the Nicaean court, spoke of the dissident state of Epiros in north-western Greece as separated by the Pindos mountains from "our Hellenic land".⁴¹

The remarkable flowering of classical scholarship after the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261 was the fruit of this Hellenic revival, promoted by men educated at Nicaea or their pupils.

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³⁶ R. Browning (1989), ref. IV.6, p. 124.

³⁷ L. Mavromatis (1982), ref. IV.8, p. 71; M. Angold (1975), ref. IV.3, p. 65.

³⁸ R. Browning, (1989), ref. IV.6, p. 124.

³⁹ H. Ahrweiler (1975), ref. II.4, p. 33.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124. The fullest discussion of the evidence is in M. Angold (1975), ref. IV.3.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PALAEOLOGAN RENAISSANCE: THE RULE OF MICHAEL VIII (1258–82)

I¹

The recapture of Constantinople by the Byzantines on 25 July 1261 and its restoration as the capital of the Empire on 15 August was a turning point in the destinies of the Byzantine Empire, but in a direction that ultimately proved disastrous. The Laskarid Empire, centred on western Asia Minor, had been a small but well-organised state, based on the support of a Greek and Orthodox population. Michael VIII turned his back on all this, seduced by the ambition to reconquer the Greek and Balkan territories controlled by other rulers since 1204 and by the dream of restoring Byzantium as a great and a universal power. The “Hellene ideology” was abandoned as a political system, though not in education and culture. The territories in Asia Minor were neglected and alienated, partly because of the conflict with much of the Byzantine church precipitated by Michael’s policies.

At Constantinople some of the pre-1204 institutions of higher learning were gradually restored. But Michael’s activities were dominated by military and political ambitions which involved excessive financial costs. He was indifferent to the economic consequences of his megalomaniac policies. He began the debasement of Byzantine golden coinage, though this assumed more ruinous dimensions under his son. Cultural and educational patronage, though not lacking, could not be one of his priorities. That is one of the probable reasons why most of the notable scholarly developments, which constitute the glory of the Palaeologan Renaissance, occurred not under Michael VIII but in the reign of his less capable but more cultured son, Andronikos II. Michael’s persecutions of his opponents in the Orthodox church were another important reason for this time-lag in intellectual progress. This will need a more detailed exploration.

¹ The main sources for sections 1 and 2 are listed in the references to this chapter.

II

Some of the chief military, political and ecclesiastical events of Michael's reign must be discussed, as the background to the retardation of the intellectual Renaissance. His clashes with many of the Byzantine clergy and their lay supporters created a new situation in the relations between the emperors and the church. Hence my detailed attention to this aspect of Michael's rule. The long-term consequence was to strengthen the trend among many Byzantine clergy (especially the monks) to regard their religious convictions and practices as much more important than conformity with the policies of the imperial government. One important side-effect was to increase the influence of groups among the clergy wholly hostile to 'Hellenic' learning or, at best, indifferent to it. This did not suffice to check scholarly progress under Andronikos II (1282-1328), but after the middle of the fourteenth century, the predominance of an 'anti-Hellenic', largely monastic, section of the church came to affect adversely the prospects of the continued progress of classical studies.

During the Nicaean period of Byzantine history Western Asia Minor was the backbone of Byzantine power and a centre of 'Hellenism'. Until the early fourteenth century it continued to supply some of the scholars who after 1261 sought their education at Constantinople. Maximos Planudes (1255-1305), originating from Nikomedia, in the north-western corner of Asia Minor, was the most illustrious of them (chapter 12).

In the twelve-sixties the Nicaean territories of Asia Minor were denuded of troops and were heavily taxed for campaigns in Greece and Bulgaria. The Anatolian subjects of Michael were outraged by the dethronement and blinding of John IV, the child-heir of the popular Laskarid dynasty. The patriarch of Nicaea was Arsenios, a native of Asia Minor, a rude and poorly-educated monk, but one devoted to the memory of the Laskarid Theodore II who had appointed him and to his Greek fellow-countrymen in Asia Minor.² Nothing could disarm his hatred towards Michael VIII for his criminal dethroning and blinding of Theodore's son (25 Dec. 1261). Michael deposed Arsenios, who died in 1273.³ The Arsenite opposition persisted far into the reign of Andronikos II.

² H. Ahrweiler (1975), ref. 3, p. 33.

³ S. Salaville, "Deux documents inédits sur les dissensions religieuses byzantines entre 1275 et 1310", *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 5 (1947), pp. 118-19.

In 1262 there were peasant uprisings near Nicaea.⁴ The Anatolian population, poorly defended, excessively exploited fiscally, and largely alienated from the usurper Michael, offered scant resistance to the Turks who were raiding all along the Byzantine frontier in Anatolia. The countryside outside fortified towns was at the mercy of these raids. At the end of his reign Michael belatedly recognized his unfortunate error in neglecting the defences of Anatolia, but blamed the disasters on the disaffection of their populations infected by the Arsenite schism.⁵ Total disaster, involving the loss of most of Byzantine Asia Minor, was to occur only under Andronikos II (chapter 6).

A second religious controversy, particularly injurious to the progress of Byzantine 'Hellenic' scholarship, was caused by Michael's determination to procure the Union of Latin and Orthodox churches, which he imposed on his resistant subjects in 1274. For Michael it was the culmination of his policy to be recognized again as the ruler of a universal Christian Empire.⁶ From soon after 1261 he styled himself the New Constantine, having reconquered Constantinople, founded as imperial capital by the first Constantine.⁷ Acceptance by the popes and Western rulers, above all by King Louis IX of France,⁸ would attest the recognition of these aspirations.

In trying to diminish opposition by Byzantine churchmen and other notables to the Union of the two churches Michael always urged the need to paralyse attempts by powers which dominated Italy to reconquer Byzantium⁹ and it is this aspect of his policies which has loomed largest in the extant historical literature.¹⁰ The chronology of Michael's successive efforts to achieve this Union was, indeed, largely shaped by fluctuations in the acuteness of those threats.

In 1261 Pope Urban IV had countered the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople by proclaiming a crusade against Byzantium.¹¹ This did not discourage Michael from continuing to send envoys to

⁴ H. Ahrweiler (1966), ref. 1, p. 335 and n. 2; A. E. Laiou (1972), ref. 7, p. 22.

⁵ Ahrweiler, *ibid.*, p. 335, n. 3, citing the historian Pachymeres.

⁶ The best statement of this aim of Michael is by G. Dagron (1984), ref. 5. My account of the pursuit of the Union of the two churches owes much to this wise article.

⁷ R. J. Macrides (1994), ref. 8, especially pp. 270–73.

⁸ P. Lemerle (1970), ref. 8.

⁹ G. Dagron (1984), ref. 5, pp. 191–92.

¹⁰ See especially D. M. Nicol (1961), ref. 11 (1971), and ref. 12, pp. 116–18.

¹¹ H. Ahrweiler (1966), ref. 1, p. 340.

Urban.¹² Michael also had to fear the enmity of Manfred, king of Sicily, whose sister, the widow of the Laskarid Theodore II, continued to be detained by him. Manfred was killed on 26 February 1266 in the battle of Benevento. His conqueror, Charles of Anjou, a younger brother of King Louis IX of France, took over Manfred's lands of Sicily and Naples. He became the greatest danger to Byzantium that Michael ever experienced, especially when in May 1267 he became also the overlord of the Frankish principality of Achaia comprising much of the Peloponnese¹³ (where the Byzantines had since 1262 only a small south-easterly area with the capital at Mistra and the vital harbour of Monemvasia).¹⁴

The main aim of the French king, Louis IX, was to promote the authority of the Latin church. As long as Emperor Michael offered promises of a Union between the Western and the Orthodox churches Louis was likely to restrain his brother Charles from any attempt to reconquer Constantinople. Michael sent two embassies to France in 1269 with proposals for such a Union.¹⁵ Unfortunately for the Byzantines, Louis died on 25 August 1270.

Pope Gregory X (1271–76) was, above all, determined to organize another crusade for the reconquest of Palestine. If Emperor Michael was willing to accept the Union of the churches as a preliminary for supporting this crusade, Gregory would stop any attempt by Charles of Anjou to attack Constantinople. Michael accepted this. On 6 July 1274, at the Council of the Western Church at Lyons, the Union was publicly proclaimed. Michael's representatives accepted all the papal conditions; there had been no previous discussion of the theological differences.¹⁶ Charles of Anjou was furious that his plans for the conquest of Byzantium were thus nullified for the time being.¹⁷

The emperor Michael accepted the claim of the pope to supremacy in the combined churches¹⁸ and the Western formula of the Procession

¹² G. Dagron (1984), ref. 5, p. 192.

¹³ There is an excellent brief account of Charles' policies by C. W. Previté-Orton (1929), ref. 14, pp. 186–92. See also J. Lognon, "Le rattachement de la Principauté de Morée au Royaume de Sicile en 1267", *Journal des Savants*, 1942, pp. 134–43.

¹⁴ Lognon, *ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁵ P. Lemerle (1970), ref. 8, p. 18.

¹⁶ For a summary of the proceedings at Lyons see D. M. Nicol (1971), ref. 12, pp. 113–15.

¹⁷ Nicol, *ibid.*, p. 116 and n. 2.

¹⁸ The description by the historian Pachymeres of the Byzantine acceptance of

of the Holy Ghost from both God and the Son (*filioque*), the main theological issue in dispute. No informed Byzantine accepted this Western formula as binding, because it had never been adopted by a universal council of the whole church. But the new patriarch of Constantinople, John Bekkos, sincerely believed that there was no fundamental difference in the beliefs of the two churches about the Trinity and this was the theological line adopted by Michael's supporters (cf. below, section III of chapter 15).¹⁹

Michael was anxious to avoid all discussions of the theological issues,²⁰ stressing only the military and political necessity for the Union. But widespread resistance developed among Byzantine churchmen and many of the lay notables, including several of the emperor's close associates and relatives. They regarded the Western *filioque* formula as heretical. Many devout Byzantines regarded the Latin and the Orthodox formulae as differing fundamentally, as expressing a profound difference in the operation of a possible relationship between God and his faithful.²¹

For Michael VIII the imposition of the Union of Lyons became a test of his authority over his subjects. Hence the cruel persecution of its opponents, including some leading scholars.²² I shall return to the unfortunate intellectual consequences of this. He was fighting a losing battle. In reality, the gulf between the Latin West and the bulk of the Byzantine society was unbridgeable, less because of the theological differences, understood only by a minority of Byzantines, than because the conquest of Byzantium by the Fourth Crusade of 1203–4 had created among the Byzantines an incurable hatred of the Latins.²³

The widespread opposition among Byzantine churchmen and notables to the Union showed that it was bound to fail. Once Charles

the pope as the head of the Apostolic Universal church is cited by Ahrweiler (1966), ref. 1, p. 342, n. 1.

¹⁹ See also A. Papadakis in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 16 (1975), pp. 229–30.

²⁰ G. Dagron (1984), ref. 5, p. 195.

²¹ For an account of some of the fundamental doctrinal differences see J. Meyendorff (1988), ref. I.10, pp. 401–7; see also A. Papadakis in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 16 (1975), pp. 230–31, 236.

²² See especially H. Evert-Kappesova's articles in *Byzantinoslavica*, 10, 13, 16 (ref. 6) and D. M. Nicol (1971), ref. 12.

²³ Ahrweiler (1975), ref. 3, pp. 39–40 and her article, "L'Empire Byzantin. Formation, évolution, décadence" in her *Byzance: Pays et les Territoires* (Variorum reprints, London, 1976), p. 197.

of Anjou again had the support of a friendly pope, Martin IV, he was able to procure, on 10 April 1281, a papal excommunication of the Byzantines. Charles was free to prepare another expedition to conquer Constantinople. Michael VIII countered with immense activity to incite a counterattack by Charles' numerous enemies, spending money lavishly. Oppressive taxation to finance the projected expedition against Constantinople exacerbated unrest in Sicily, long misgoverned by Charles, and a fortuitous accident on 30 March 1282 led to a wholesale massacre of Charles' troops and adherents on that island ("the Sicilian Vespers"). The threat to Byzantium was ended, permanently as it proved.²⁴ When Michael VIII died in December 1282, his son, Andronikos II, could at once safely abandon the Union of Lyons. His policy of healing the divisions inside the Byzantine church helped to create gradually a less acrimonious atmosphere, where a cultural Renaissance could flourish.

III

When Michael VIII recovered Constantinople in 1261, he found "a desolate, de-populated city". A vast amount of rebuilding was urgently needed. The Komnenian palace of Blachernai on the Golden Horn, in the extreme north-western corner, was restored and became again the chief imperial residence. It contained a library.²⁵

Some of the traditional educational institutions were re-established soon after 1261.²⁶ It is not certain that one can speak of a restoration of the imperial university. But a school of higher education soon functioned, presided over by George Akropolites, who was also until his death in 1282 Michael's chief minister. Gregory of Cyprus, the future patriarch of Constantinople (1283–89), reminiscing in his *Autobiography* about his education in the Byzantine capital between around 1267 and 1273, had highest praise for George's teaching. Gregory studied mathematics, including the geometry of Euclid, rhetoric and much Aristotelian philosophy. His courses in it began with logical treatises. The *Metaphysics*, one of the longest Aristotelian

²⁴ C. W. Previté-Orton (1929), ref. 14, pp. 197–200.

²⁵ A. M. Talbot (1993), ref. 15, pp. 249–50.

²⁶ The chief source for my account of higher education is C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. 4, chapters II and III.

treatises, came much later.²⁷ Akropolites acted as teacher until he became the chief lay envoy to the Council of Lyons in 1274.²⁸

Patriarch Germanos III (1265–66), who was later one of Michael's leading ecclesiastical envoys to the Council of Lyons, was a highly educated man. He may have been responsible for restoring the traditional Patriarchal School. Its three professors commented on different parts of the Bible (the Psalter, the Pauline Epistles, the Gospels). But, in contrast to contemporary Western universities north of the Alps and the Italian Dominican schools, it did not provide any systematic theological training.²⁹ In 1265 Germanos procured the appointment to the dignity of the Master of the Rhetors of Manuel Holobolos, who taught rhetoric and Aristotelian logic at an institution connected with the Patriarchal School and located at the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. The students there and the Master of the Rhetors were paid by the emperor Michael.³⁰

Holobolos had been in disgrace between 1261 and 1265, and had been mutilated on Michael's orders for his adherence to the anti-Palaeologan resistance of Arsenios. His rehabilitation in 1265 lasted only until 1273 when he was again incarcerated for opposing the proposed Union with the Latin Church. He was restored as soon as Michael died in December 1282 and was active as a teacher and writer until at least 1302. He taught grammar, poetry, rhetoric and Aristotelian logic.³¹

One of the greatest scholars, active until his death in 1310, was George Pachymeres. He wrote on mathematics and philosophy and became the outstanding historian of his age (chapters 10, 15, 17). He was opposed to the Union of Lyons but knew how to keep his views private under Michael. He was the professor on the Pauline Epistles at the Patriarchal School by 1277.³² It is impossible to say which of his more important writings date from the reign of Michael VIII. During the last decade of Michael's reign Pachymeres and Gregory of Cyprus were the two most distinguished scholars teaching

²⁷ A. Garzya, "Observations sur 'l'Autobiographie' de Grégoire de Chypre", in his *Storia e Interpretazione di Testi Bizantini* (Variorum Reprints, London, 1974), no. XIII, p. 35; N. Constantinides (1982), ref. 4, pp. 32–4.

²⁸ Constantinides, *ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁹ Meyendorff (1988), ref. 10, pp. 398–99.

³⁰ Constantinides (1982), ref. 4, p. 54.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–57.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

at Constantinople. Akropolites may have ceased teaching after 1274. Most of his writings were destroyed at the start of 1283 in the reaction against the Unionist policies of which he had been a leading agent.³³

Some gifted scholars may have been diverted from their classical and scientific studies by the need to cultivate Michael's patronage through promoting his religious policies. Maximos Planudes (1255–1305), the greatest Hellenic scholar of his time, was one of the rare Byzantines with an excellent knowledge of Latin. He translated, in the cause of Michael's Unionist policy, St. Augustine's important treatise *De Trinitate*. This provided the theological foundation for the Western doctrine of the Trinity that underlay the Latin idea of the Procession of the Holy Ghost from both God and the Son (*filioque*). After Michael's death Planudes abstained from further theological writings. His translation of St. Augustine "was hardly ever used by Byzantine theologians".³⁴

Holobolos is the best-known of the victims of Michael's religious persecutions, which must have adversely affected scholarly progress. George of Cyprus, who was in charge of a school of higher education at the monastery of Akataleptos at Constantinople between 1273/74 and 1283, stated in his *Autobiography* that during that period fears for his life prevented him from writing anything.³⁵

Some of the scholars who achieved distinction under Andronikos II were first trained in the reign of his father. This is true of the greatest of them, Maximos Planudes (chapter 12). John Pediasimos, who probably was teaching at Thessalonica between 1284 and his death (1310/14), was a pupil of George Akropolites.³⁶ He may have contributed to making that city in the reign of Andronikos II almost as important a scholarly centre as Constantinople.

In chapter 7 I shall suggest that the important translations into Latin of philosophical and scientific texts by William of Moerbeke owed much to the advice of Byzantine scholars and that the manuscripts he used were partly found by him in Byzantine territories during the rule of Michael VIII. Michael's reign was certainly an

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁴ Meyendorff (1988), ref. 10, pp. 399–400.

³⁵ Constantinides (1982), ref. 4, p. 64, n. 72.

³⁶ The tentative reconstruction of his career, *ibid.*, pp. 116–22, is probably correct.

essential preliminary stage for the extraordinary flourishing of scholarship under his much more learned son (chapters 8–10, 12–18).

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(See also the references to chapters 4 and 15.)

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CHAPTER SIX

THE REIGN OF ANDRONIKOS II (1282–1328)

I

Politically and militarily the reign of Andronikos II “was a long story of frustrations and disasters”.¹ His enthusiastic patronage of an intellectual Renaissance was one of the exceptional redeeming features of this sombre period of irreversible Byzantine decline. The intensified cultivation of ancient Greek literature and science was the one thing that could still reassure the Byzantine elite of notables about their intrinsic superiority in the world. The active encouragement by Andronikos of higher education, classical scholarship and learned debates at the imperial court made a vital contribution.

In Andronikos “Byzantium had an intellectual emperor at a time when it could ill afford him”.² He was a gentle, contemplative and profoundly pious man (though also very superstitious). His choices of patriarchs of Constantinople alternated between austere, spiritual figures like Athanasios (below, section II) and men of eminent learning, like Gregory of Cyprus (1283–89, chapters 5 and 15) and John Glykys (1315–19), a pupil of Gregory.³

Andronikos liked to surround himself with advisers who were highly educated men: Constantine Akropolites, son of George,⁴ Nikephoros Chumnos,⁵ and, above all, Theodore Metochites, his chief minister from c. 1305 to their joint overthrow in 1328 (chapters 16 and 17). The choice of Metochites was particularly unfortunate. He was a man of unusual intellectual originality, but not very able politically, without any military experience and highly corrupt (chapters 16 and 17).

Andronikos spent much time reading and also produced writings,

¹ A. E. Laiou (1972), ref. I.7, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.5, pp. 36–7, 43, 98–9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–42, 100–1.

⁵ J. Verpeaux, *Nicéphore Choumnos, Homme d'État et Humaniste Byzantin* (c. 1250/1255–1327), (Paris, 1959).

especially on theology. He personally composed answers to attacks on his policies.⁶ The two leading historians of his time, Pachymeres and Gregoras, who both knew him well, attest that he loved to preside over erudite discussions, especially on theological, philosophical and scientific subjects. At one such meeting Gregoras presented his scientifically correct but politically risky proposal for the reform of the calendar (chapter 18).⁷ Andronikos provided generous scholarly patronage. The rediscovery of the *Geography* of Ptolemy (2nd century A.D.) by Maximos Planudes was much appreciated by him and we still have the luxury presentation copy (ms.Vat.Urbinatus.82) that Planudes gave him (chapter 12). The magnificent collection of Aristotelian commentaries in the Florentine ms.Laur.85.1 (762 folios of excellent and partly unique texts) was most probably executed in the scriptorium of the imperial palace of Andronikos (chapter 10).

Andronikos was “a man of great learning but little political wisdom”.⁸ He inherited a state surrounded by enemies and a parlous financial situation. His attempted economies and fiscal expedients were repeatedly misguided. One can argue that he could ill afford to devote much of his time and money to intellectual activities and scholarly patronage. A brief look at his financial measures and at some of the military and political failures and disasters will support this argument.

There was a succession of further devaluations of the Byzantine gold coinage, each of them caused by some military emergency. After that of 1303 the Byzantine gold *hyperperon* contained only two thirds of the equivalent coin in the Nicaean period up to 1261.⁹ Increases in taxation were alienating Byzantine peasantry, who bore the bulk of this financial burden.¹⁰

Andronikos was determined to end all attempts at maintaining the Union of Lyons in order to restore some religious peace in Byzantium. This meant the abandonment of seeking Western help against the Turks. The Venetian Marino Sanudo, writing in the 1330s, thought

⁶ L. Bréhier (1940), ref. I.4, p. 216.

⁷ Bréhier, *ibid.* and Laiou (1972), ref. I.7, p. 8.

⁸ Laiou (1972), ref. I.7, p. 10.

⁹ C. Morrisson, “Monnaie et finances dans l'Empire Byzantin, X^e–XIV^e siècles” in Morrisson (and others), *Hommes et Richesses dans l'Empire Byzantin VIII^e–XV^e Siècles*, II (Paris, 1991), pp. 308–15.

¹⁰ The account that follows of some of the disasters suffered by the Empire under Andronikos II is based on the sources listed in section I of the references to this chapter.

that this was a disastrous policy which contributed greatly to the Turkish conquest of Western Anatolia.¹¹ Even more obviously disastrous were the policies of financial retrenchment on the Byzantine army and navy. The quality of the army deteriorated considerably. After the death of Charles of Anjou (7 January 1285)¹² Andronikos thought that it was safe to disband most of the navy, as it was too costly to maintain. This was one of the most fateful misjudgements of his reign.¹³

From the start of his rule Andronikos intended to concentrate military expenditure on the defence of Asia Minor against the Turks, but several expeditions in the 1280s and 1290s produced no lasting improvements. The major Anatolian landowners tended to support the Arsenite clergy, lastingly alienated by the criminal displacement and blinding of the last Laskarid ruler, and its population resented the inordinately heavy taxation. Popular hostility to the imperial government reached an extreme level in 1302–4, when Andronikos employed in Asia Minor an army of migrant Alans and then of Catalan mercenaries summoned from Sicily in 1303. The Anatolian population became convinced that the Turkish raiders were less to be dreaded than those brigand Byzantine mercenaries.¹⁴ After 1304 virtually all countryside of Byzantine Asia Minor was out of imperial control. Considerable revenues from imperial estates there and from taxation were lost for ever. A number of towns continued to resist the Turks, but most of them were gradually captured during the second half of the reign of Andronikos (only Philadelphia, east of Smyrna in West-Central Anatolia, remained Byzantine until as late as 1391).¹⁵ Belatedly, after 1304, Andronikos tried to rebuild a fleet, but he lacked the money to do so effectively and the various Turkish emirates, having conquered all the coastline of Anatolia, developed formidable fleets that ravaged, and partly conquered, the islands of the Aegean sea. Dire disasters followed in Greece itself.

The Catalan mercenaries, whose leader, Roger de Flor, was murdered

¹¹ Laiou (1972), ref. I.7, p. 2.

¹² C. W. Previté-Orton, "Italy 1250–99", in *Cambridge Medieval History*, 6 (1929), p. 200.

¹³ H. Ahrweiler (1966), ref. I.1, pp. 374–81.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

¹⁵ Laiou (1972), ref. I.7, p. 290.

in the Byzantine camp by the leader of the Alans,¹⁶ revolted in 1305 against Andronikos and until 1307 ravaged Thrace terribly, menacing even Constantinople and causing a terrible famine there (section II below). The second decade of the fourteenth century was a period of relative improvement in Byzantine Greece, permitting some financial recovery. But in 1321 the emperor's grandson, the future Andronikos III, led a series of destructive rebellions that ended in the dethronement of Andronikos II in May 1328. Surveying the disastrous history of his reign one can justifiably question whether Andronikos was not spending more on his religious patronage and on subsidizing intellectual enterprises than he could really afford. But, of course, these things were essential to his sense of well-being.

II

The activities of the leading classical scholars in the reign of Andronikos II will be discussed in a succession of chapters which form the core of this book (chapters 8–18). However, they do not cover one other aspect of the early Palaeologan Renaissance. In the last section of my Introductory chapter (chapter 1) I have mentioned what may be called a *Spiritual Renaissance*, only partly connected with scholarship. Some men, of whom the most notable was Joseph the Philosopher, were both distinguished scholars and very admirable exponents of Byzantine spiritual humanism (c. 1280–1330, chapter 10). Theoktistos, archbishop of Adrianople between 1278–1283, and a defender of the Union of Lyons, deserves notice here. His friend, the great Byzantine scholar Maximos Planudes, and the historian George Pachymeres both praised his intelligence. His fellow-defender of the Union, George Metochites spoke of the greatness of his soul and the nobility of his character. Planudes attested his distinguished record as a classical scholar, which contributed to his eminence as a canonist and a theologian. Around 1289 he went into exile in Italy and was still alive in 1310.¹⁷ George Pachymeres, like Joseph, was an eminent student of science and philosophy (chapters 10, 17). He was also an independent and courageous chronicler of his time. He not only freely

¹⁶ M. C. Bartusis (1992) ref. I.3, p. 80.

¹⁷ V. Laurent (1953), ref. II.8; P. A. M. Leone (ed.), *Maximi Monachi Planudis Epistulae* (Amsterdam, 1991), letter 9, pp. 21–2.

criticized the mistaken policies of Michael VIII and Andronikos II, but was willing to castigate the abuses committed by their governments and denounce the crimes of Michael VIII in defiance of Christian principles (chapter 15).

Here I shall be concerned only with a couple of leading prelates, Theoleptos, Archbishop of Philadelphia in west-central Anatolia, and Athanasios I, patriarch of Constantinople, who were indifferent to secular learning, but were remarkable men of action, who exemplified some of the best spiritual values of the Byzantine church.¹⁸

Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) was the most influential exponent of the theology of the Hesychast group within the Byzantine church, ascetic extremists, hostile to secular learning (cf. chapter 19). Palamas regarded Theoleptos and Athanasios among his principal spiritual masters early in the fourteenth century.¹⁹ Of Theoleptos he said that this prelate “bore witness shortly before our time” and was to be recognized “to have assessed the power of the Holy Spirit” and to have “passed to us these things by word of mouth”.²⁰ He had similarly a great admiration for Athanasios. As archbishop of Thessalonica after 1347, Palamas “was well respected for his sense of social justice”, just as Athanasios had been at Constantinople. Hesychasm, as propagated by Palamas, was a movement for “broader social, ecclesiastical and moral reform” and for assertion of the paramount duty of the church to promote Christian ideals. The career of Athanasios as patriarch was remembered as an embodiment of this programme.²¹

Both Theoleptos and Athanasios had been monks for many years before becoming archbishops. But, unlike numerous Hesychast monks who spent their lives chiefly in prayer seeking a mystical visitation of God’s “energies upon them”, these two prelates were renowned for their pastoral activities. Theoleptos was the spiritual director of several notables. We have much correspondence with one of them, Eirene-Eulogia Chumnaina, widow of a younger son of Andronikos II. When she wanted to retire from being an abbess in Constantinople in order to become a solitary hermit, “Theoleptos was horrified and forbade her ever again to entertain such absurd an idea”.²²

¹⁸ My account of those two prelates is based on sources listed in section II of the references to this chapter.

¹⁹ J. Meyendorff (1974), ref. II.15a, pp. 17, 20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²¹ J. Boojamra (1993), ref. II.2, p. 154.

²² D. M. Nicol (1994), ref. II.16, pp. 64–5.

Theoleptos (c. 1250–1322)²³ was one of the most noted opponents of the Church Union of Lyons and was punished for this. Once the Union was abandoned by Andronikos II, promotion came quickly to the archbishopric of Philadelphia. He conducted successfully the defence of his city besieged by the Turks and care for his diocese remained always his priority. He was a fierce enemy of the Arsenite schismatics in Asia Minor, even to the extent of defying Andronikos when the latter employed an Arsenite general.

Theoleptos attached importance to the customary routine of worship and to Christian sacraments. We have what may be a partial list of his works.²⁴ He was not interested in classical learning.²⁵ There was nothing very original in his theological writings, which are chiefly concerned with proper Christian conduct, but express with rare simplicity and eloquence the essentials of good Christian life and of the importance of the bishop's task as "the mediator between God and men". "It is rare to find an Orthodox Byzantine to express in such vivid words" these fundamental truths.²⁶

One can understand why many of his contemporaries, especially among churchmen, regarded Athanasios (c. 1230/35–c. 1315, patriarch 1289–93, 1303–9, canonized before 1368) with dismay, or even hatred. He was a fanatical rigorist, a hard, vindictive enemy of all non-Orthodox groups in the Byzantine lands,²⁷ utterly self-righteous. His reading had consisted exclusively of the Bible and selected church fathers. "His enemies accused him of illiteracy"²⁸ and even his admiring well-informed biographer, Theoktistos, who had known him personally,²⁹ acknowledges that Athanasios "studied little of general sciences".³⁰ He could be utterly irrational in his religious utterances, stating in one of his letters that Adam could have known the Epistles of the New Testament!³¹ However, he was completely single-minded in pursuing what he accepted as God's commands and a succession of modern historians has been unable to withhold admiration from

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁴ J. Gouillard (1946), ref. II.5, coll. 340–41.

²⁵ Nicol (1994), ref. II.16, p. 66.

²⁶ Meyendorff (1974), ref. II.15a, pp. 19–20.

²⁷ J. L. Boojamra (1979), ref. II.1.

²⁸ Meyendorff (1975), ref. II.15b, p. 98.

²⁹ H. Delehaye, "La vie d'Athanase, Patriarche de Constantinople . . .", *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 17 (1897), p. 41.

³⁰ Meyendorff (1975), ref. II.15b, p. 98.

³¹ A. M. Talbot (1975), ref. II.19, letter 87 and p. 417.

a prelate who "attacked violently everyone—bishop, monk or layman—who enriched himself at the expense of the poor", and "made every effort to help those in need, using for this purpose the income of the church".³²

We are exceptionally well-informed about him. A register of his letters and homilies, chiefly covering his second patriarchate (1303–9), contains 184 documents and 151 of his letters have been edited recently.³³ There survive two biographies by Hesychast admirers and many of their statements can be confirmed from other sources.³⁴ The historian Pachymeres, who served under him on the staff of St. Sophia, was a hostile witness and he observed that Athanasios' monastic training did not equip him to govern others,³⁵ but he contains a mass of invaluable information about the patriarch's doings. His continuator, Gregoras, is more appreciative of the Athanasian church reforms,³⁶ but he came to Constantinople after the end of Athanasios' second patriarchate (1303–9).

Athanasios I has been described as "perhaps the first example of the return of the ascetic to his former position of authority and importance in society".³⁷ His recent biographer calls him "the most aggressive reform-minded patriarch [of Constantinople] in its history".³⁸ His activities "illustrate the new authority acquired by the church . . . a moral authority that grew with the political decay of the state".³⁹

Andronikos II was overawed by Athanasios and frequently exasperated by his demands, but greatly admired him and likened him to St. John Chrysostom. Athanasios himself invoked St. John as his model.⁴⁰ One of the greatest Byzantine Church Fathers (late 4th century A.D.), he came to be known as the "golden-mouthed", and his writings were immensely popular. There still survive over 1900 manuscripts.⁴¹ This passionate crusader for restoring Christian morality

³² Meyendorff (1975), ref. II.15b, p. 98.

³³ Talbot (1975), ref. II.19, p. xxxvi. This is the edition of 151 of his letters.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

³⁵ R. Guiland (1959), ref. II.6, p. 67.

³⁶ Talbot (1973), ref. II.18, p. 28.

³⁷ R. Macrides (1981), ref. II.14, p. 82.

³⁸ J. L. Boonjamra (1993), ref. II.2, p. 2.

³⁹ Meyendorff (1975), ref. II.15b, p. 99.

⁴⁰ Talbot (1973), ref. II.18, p. 15.

⁴¹ J. Bardy, "Jean Chrysostome (Saint)", *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 10, pt. 1 (1924), coll. 667–68.

was a highly-educated preacher and Biblical commentator, unlike Athanasios who had no secular education. But both shared the conviction that nothing mattered except adherence to God's commandments. Athanasios regarded the disasters that were befalling Byzantium as God's just punishments for the unchristian lives and the lack of faith of the Byzantines.⁴² He thundered against the failings of both clergy and laity with the language and the vehemence of the Hebrew prophets. In one of his letters he expressly invokes the Prophet Ezekiel.⁴³

Athanasios was first introduced to Andronikos II shortly after the emperor's accession. He rapidly impressed that pious but superstitious monarch not only by the austerity of his life but also by the belief that he had a gift of prophecy. Athanasios had no interest in theology. None of his extant letters and sermons contain any mentions of religious dogmas.⁴⁴ His indifference to theological learning was, indeed, one of the reasons why Andronikos on 14 October 1289 appointed him as patriarch, hoping that this might still the dogmatic disputes that had led to the resignation of the previous patriarch, Gregory of Cyprus.⁴⁵ Those hopes of greater internal peace were sadly disappointed, as the rigoristic proceedings of Athanasios against many of the bishops and other clergy soon procured him a host of enemies and finally necessitated his resignation on 16 October 1293. After lengthy negotiations from early in 1303 Andronikos arranged his reappointment on 23 June 1303. Athanasios exacted a promise of a wide freedom of action against Arsenite schismatics, heretics (including Latin clergy at Constantinople) and all other opponents.⁴⁶ His severities became greater than ever. Pachymeres speaks of him compelling absentee bishops to leave the capital (by 1305).⁴⁷

Of worthy clerics some he suspected of grave offences, others he reduced to inactivity by taking away their benefices. Anyone who in any way displeased him was sure to meet with the displeasure also of the Emperor.⁴⁸

⁴² Talbot (1975), ref. II.19, letters nos. 36, 41, 67 and pp. 318, 379.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, letter 48 and Laurent (1971), ref. II.12, no. 1694 on p. 483.

⁴⁴ Talbot (1973), ref. II.18, p. 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ V. Laurent (1965), ref. II.10; J. Gill (1970), ref. II.4, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Cited *ibid.*, p. 16; Talbot (1973), ref. II.18, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Cited in Gill, *ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

Gradually he lost the support of all the bishops and none of them stood by him when he was forced to resign for the second time on 23 September 1309.⁴⁹ This paved the way for a final reconciliation of Andronikos with the Arsenite schismatics in the following year, after a schism lasting nearly half a century.⁵⁰

The correspondence of Athanasios alleges that many of his opponents, especially among the bishops, were, indeed, guilty of financial corruption and of various breaches of religious rules. His fault lay not in pursuing some men who clearly deserved blame, but of not knowing how to practice moderation. Besides, some of the prelates he victimized were distinguished and cultured men. Athanasios could not appreciate that, though Andronikos and the historian Pachymeres did.⁵¹

From early in his reign Andronikos II had been worried by the corruption disgracing Byzantine justice. It was characteristic of him that it needed an earthquake in 1296 to push him into serious reform. He set up at Constantinople a special tribunal of 12 members consisting of prelates and lay senators who swore a special oath to administer honest justice. However, it produced no lasting improvement.⁵²

We know from Pachymeres that judicial corruption was causing much discontent and even occasional riots. Andronikos was well-satisfied with the desire of Athanasios to consider in his synodal court complaints about corrupt officials and cases of oppressions of ordinary people by officials and rich notables. He exercised this sort of jurisdiction throughout his second patriarchate. Likewise, when a fire had destroyed a part of the commercial quarter of Constantinople, Athanasios acted as arbitrator in the complex disputes that followed and tried to recover the things carried away by looters after the fire.⁵³

Joseph Kalothetos, the second biographer of Athanasios, writing between 1334 and 1360,⁵⁴ stressed that the welfare of the common people, especially at Constantinople,

⁴⁹ Talbot (1973), ref. II.18, p. 25.

⁵⁰ V. Laurent, "Les grandes crises religieuses de Byzance, La Fin du schisme arsenite", *Académie Roumaine, Bulletin de la Section Historique*, 26.2 (Bucharest, 1945). On p. 242 Laurent suggests that a number of bishops came to support the Arsenites in protest against Athanasios.

⁵¹ E.g. Patriarch Athanasios II of Alexandria. See A. Failler, "Le séjour d'Athanase d'Alexandrie à Constantinople", *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 35 (1971), especially pp. 52, 54–6.

⁵² P. Lemerle (1948), ref. II.13, pp. 294–95.

⁵³ J. L. Boonjamra (1993), ref. II.2, pp. 135–50.

⁵⁴ D. J. Constantelos (1975), ref. II.3, p. 611.

was Athanasios' major preoccupation . . . The establishment of social justice . . . the protection of the poor from the powerful and the wealthy, the prosperity of widows and orphans, the release of prisoners [held by the enemies of Byzantium] . . . preoccupied him daily.⁵⁵

There was an appalling increase of poverty. Numerous fugitives from the Turkish conquests in Anatolia and from the ravages of the Catalans and other mercenary armies were reduced to destitution and Constantinople was full of desperate refugees.⁵⁶ Serious shortages of food developed at Constantinople after 1303 and by 1305 there was real famine there. Speculation by corn merchants was an important initial reason for this and Pachymeres also stressed the disruptions of economic life caused by the debasement of the coinage.⁵⁷

One of the gravest crises of the reign of Andronikos developed after the defeat on 10 July 1305 of the Byzantine army by the Catalans.⁵⁸ Until the summer of 1307 they camped in Thrace, ravaging what was normally one of the chief sources of grain for Constantinople. There seems to have been little sowing of corn by Thracian peasants in the autumn of 1305 and the supplies for the capital were collapsing by the summer of 1306. Furthermore, Svetoslav of Bulgaria, at war with Byzantium, was cutting off another of the main sources of corn-supply for Constantinople. There was a grave danger that the Byzantine capital might be starved into surrender to the Catalans. In the autumn of 1306 Andronikos was persuaded by his advisers into a desperate policy of forbidding East Thracian peasants to sow crops and he withheld armed protection to some of them against the Catalans (accorded earlier, in 1305). The plan was to force the Catalans to withdraw from Thrace, as they would not be able to feed their army. In vain Athanasios protested against this imperial policy, which in the winter of 1306–7 caused one of the worst famines in the capital's history. According to Theoktistos, the earliest biographer of Athanasios, it was "a famine more terrible than any ever recorded, so that whole families were entirely extinguished and dead people were lying in piles in the streets".⁵⁹ This Byzantine

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 615 and n. 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 618.

⁵⁷ Talbot (1975), ref. II.19, p. 394; R. Guiland (1959), ref. II.6, pp. 77–79.

⁵⁸ The account of the crisis that follows is based chiefly on A. Laiou (1968), ref. I.6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

policy did, however, work and by the summer of 1307 the Catalans had abandoned Thrace and moved into southern Macedonia.⁶⁰

Since 1305 Athanasios had tried to organize poor relief in Constantinople and his efforts became particularly important in the terrible winter of 1306–7. He organized public feeding of poor people and would give them food personally.⁶¹ He also distributed clothing. He tried to raise as much money for this as he could from various church institutions. He begged Andronikos in a series of letters to reintroduce controls over the price of corn and to try to check hoarding.⁶² The emperor did take some such measures, though they were quite inadequate.

Athanasios did more for the people of Constantinople during those terrible years than anyone. An unofficial cult of him as a saint developed in his monastery in Constantinople and among the lower classes of the capital.⁶³ His second biographer, Joseph Kalothetos, writing between 1334 and 1360, reflected the traditional memories about him when he praised his life of poverty and regarded, as a fitting tribute to him, the message of the New Testament “that the rich will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”⁶⁴

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⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁶¹ R. Guiland (1959), ref. II.6, p. 79 and n. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 77–8.

⁶³ Macrides (1981), ref. II.14, p. 85; J. L. Boonjamra (1993), ref. II.2, p. 156.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TRANSLATIONS FROM GREEK INTO LATIN, CHIEFLY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

I

The attempt in 1274 to create a lasting union between the Western and the Eastern Churches, and its collapse after 1282, were discussed in the previous two chapters. However, one of the positive results of a period of closer links between the Latin and the Byzantine civilizations was the translation from Greek into Latin of a considerable number of philosophical and scientific works. By 1300 almost all genuine Aristotelian treatises and a number of valuable ancient commentaries on them were available in Latin versions.

In the second half of the thirteenth century the translations from the Greek of many Aristotelian writings and the revisions of earlier Greek translations were almost all the work of one single scholar, the Dominican William of Moerbeke (d. 1286).¹ He was a papal chaplain at Viterbo possibly from at least 1266 (certainly by 1267) and a papal penitentiary from 1272 at the latest, until April 1278, when he was appointed archbishop of Corinth.² In the years preceding the Union of Lyons in 1274 he appears to have been responsible for much of the Greek correspondence of the popes.³ He was one of the chief Greek interpreters at the Council of Lyons. At the solemn pontifical Mass on 29 June 1274, celebrating the conclusion of the Union, he was one of the two papal penitentiaries who sang the papal Credo, including the crucial formula of the Procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Father and the Son".⁴

A comprehensive account of the emergence of the almost complete

¹ His translations and revisions of older translations from Greek are listed in the Table forming the Appendix to this chapter.

² For a select list of publications about him see section I of the references to this chapter.

³ A. Pattin (1989), ref. I.10, p. 395.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Latin Aristotle and of the consequences of this for Western theology and learning would require a separate book. Here I can only stress that Moerbeke's fresh translations and his revisions of the existing ones, greatly enlarged the knowledge of Aristotle in the Latin West, as also of late Neoplatonism, represented by Proclus (410–485 A.D.), the most systematic of the expositors of the Neoplatonic doctrines. Moerbeke translated some of Proclus' most important writings and, through them, introduced to the West more of Plato (particularly a part of Plato's *Parmenides*).

The earliest, and greatest, beneficiary of Moerbeke's translations was St. Thomas Aquinas. He used them extensively in his later writings.⁵ St. Thomas was seeking the genuine teachings of Aristotle. He brought to this quest an exceptional grasp of what was required in pursuing valid philosophical demonstrations, an unusually acute sense of historical development and an awareness that one had to establish the authenticity of writings which one was citing.⁶

He was a profoundly original thinker and very independent in what he took from his sources. Moerbeke's translations, of Proclus as well as of Aristotle, were fused by him with parts of earlier translations from Arabic writers.⁷ While I cannot say much about the influence of Moerbeke's versions on St. Thomas' scholastic successors, I shall cite some evidence about the use made of them by St. Thomas as an illustration of Moerbeke's importance.

The long-term consequences of Moerbeke's labours as translator were immense. Many of his translations continued to be copied very widely. We have in several cases hundreds of manuscripts containing Moerbeke's renderings or revisions of particular works.⁸ A large proportion of them were destined for university students, especially at Paris.⁹ Moerbeke gave a massive impulse to discussions of an immense range of theological, philosophical and scientific problems. Besides his Aristotelian and Proclian translations, he also provided the first Latin versions of the bulk of the mathematical writings of

⁵ I am chiefly relying on I. T. Eschmann's catalogue of St. Thomas' works appended to E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London, 1957).

⁶ M. Grabmann (1946), ref. I.2, pp. 68–71.

⁷ L. Minio-Paluello (1965), ref. I.5, pp. 634–36.

⁸ Cf. the table of Moerbeke's translations in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹ E.g. the vast majority of the 107 known manuscripts of Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Politics*. Cf. B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, vol. II, p. 487 and n. 2.

Archimedes, using Greek manuscripts that subsequently disappeared.

The contrast between the serious use made in Western Europe of some of the Aristotelian texts (in Latin translations) and the Byzantine neglect of a few of the same treatises illuminates the different priorities of these two civilizations. In the West they were incorporated into fundamental inquiries into a combination of Christian revelation with human rationality, especially in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. There are in his works frequent cross-references between different treatises of Aristotle, as in his mind all the essentials of Aristotelian outlook and methods were fused into a coherent system. Thus the first sentence of his Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* cites the beginning of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, while his Commentary on the *Politics* starts with a quotation from the Aristotelian *Physics*.¹⁰ He often refers to Aristotle as simply "the Philosopher".¹¹

In the century after 1261 Byzantine theologians were chiefly concerned with issues that had no connection with lessons drawn from Aristotle's search after rational order (chapters 5 and 6 above; chapter 19 below). Only a few of the Byzantine scholars fluent in Latin, and aware of what the Latin civilisation had to offer, profited from some of the achievements of Western scholasticism (see especially chapter 19 below, about the brothers Kydones).

The *Politics* of Aristotle meant almost nothing to Byzantines.¹² But in the West they became an influential element in writings about human society and the ideal state. Greek city states were of no importance to Byzantines, but aroused intense interest in some of the writers of the fourteenth-century Italian city states. Some of the uses to which his translation of the *Politics* were put by the Italians would have horrified Moerbeke, the devoted servant of a succession of popes. But Marsilio's anti-papal bombshell of *The Defender of the Peace*, rooted in Aristotle's *Politics*¹³ and *Nicomachean Ethics*, or the use of these writings by Dante in the *De Monarchia*,¹⁴ showed how they could make a vital contribution to a revival of political and ethical speculations.

Such vast subjects cannot be pursued here in any detail. This

¹⁰ A. P. D'Entrèves (ed.), Aquinas, *Selected Political Writings* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 189–195.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, in the first sentences of the two Commentaries.

¹² See below, section IV of this chapter.

¹³ See A. Gewirth (1964), ref. II.5, vol. I (Introduction).

¹⁴ L. Minio-Paluello (1979), ref. I.9, pp. 64, 73–75.

chapter can only examine one corner of this field of relations between Byzantine learning and Western scholasticism. It is a corner which is not explored often. Moerbeke and some other translators (chiefly of medical texts) presumably owed much to the information received from Byzantine scholars about the location and deciphering of Byzantine *codices* and the interpretation of their contents. This may provide some welcome, indirect evidence about Byzantine philosophical and scientific learning, as well as about some of its limitations.

II

Moerbeke never explained why he carried out his large series of translations into Latin. L. Minio-Paluello has plausibly suggested that his Aristotelian translations were prompted by the existence of a variety of versions of many of them, some translated from Greek, others from Arabic or Hebrew. Scholars who wanted to use them were uncertain about their quality. We have several manuscripts, dating mostly from the time before the start of Moerbeke's translating activities, trying to compare the various Latin versions of the same Aristotelian treatises. Moerbeke probably embarked on his translating career to put some order into this textual chaos by providing more obviously authoritative versions, translated directly from Greek.¹⁵

Moerbeke was clearly impelled by wide curiosity. He was collecting information outside what seem to have been his main fields of study. We have, for example, a list of writings ascribed to Hippocrates, the traditional founder of Greek medical scholarship, which he inserted into one of the manuscripts used by him (the Vienna ms. Vindob. philos. gr. 100).¹⁶

An unusual feature of the knowledge he must have acquired in Greece was his awareness that the ancient Doric dialect had a different orthography from the standard Attic Greek and different grammatical endings of nouns and verbs. Awareness of this appears after 1280 in the editions by Byzantine scholars of the Sicilian poetry of Theocritus, but Moerbeke showed that he knew this already in 1269 in translating Archimedes from Syracuse in Sicily.¹⁷

¹⁵ L. Minio-Paluello (1965), ref. I.5, pp. 623–28.

¹⁶ No. 36 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁷ M. Clagett (1976), ref. II.1, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 49.

Moerbeke acquired gradually a very wide knowledge of ancient Greek vocabulary. He was at his best in handling philosophical terms,¹⁸ though his mastery of Greek never became fully adequate. Only a long residence in one of the Dominican convents in Greece and opportunities for contacts with Byzantine scholars can account for his wide knowledge of ancient Greek. We know that he did one of his earliest translations (no. 1 in the Appendix to this chapter) at Thebes in central Greece, where a convent had existed since, at least, 1253.¹⁹ Several of his other early translations are dated in 1260 at Nicaea, at a time when it was still the Byzantine capital (Appendix to this chapter: nos. 2, 3, 5).

Our knowledge of his methods of working owes most to two manuscripts. The Vienna ms. Vindob. philos. gr. 100 was the source for the translation of books 11 and 14 of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, as well as of a major part of book 13.²⁰ His autograph copy of the translation of Archimedes and other mathematical texts has been identified in ms. Vat. Ottobonianus lat. 1850.²¹ In some other cases we can reconstruct fairly convincingly the original copy of his translation from its immediate descendant, (e.g. in the case of the Aristotelian *Politics*).²²

Like all medieval translators into Latin, Moerbeke tried to produce fairly literal translations. This did result in clumsy and not very readable versions, contemptuously denounced by humanist translators of the fifteenth century. Particularly awkward were his renderings of famous ancient writers, like Homer,²³ whom Aristotle cited with delight. Moerbeke never achieved the mastery of this literature, unlike his Byzantine contemporaries, and one has the impression that he did not appreciate its importance.

However, the medieval methods of literal translation, of which Moerbeke was a particularly skilful practitioner, had reasonable explanations. The philosophical and scientific writings which he was translating were works regarded as authoritative. Faithful adherence to

¹⁸ L. G. Westerink in *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 15 (1962), p. 489.

¹⁹ M. Grabmann (1946), ref. I.2, p. 36.

²⁰ Cf. no. 5 in the Appendix to this chapter and the article of G. Vuillemin-Diem cited there.

²¹ *Ibid.*, no. 17.

²² B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, vol. II, pp. 487–97.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 495–96; M. Untersteiner (1980), ref. I.11, pp. 194–95 and n. 66 on p. 195.

their original wording was obligatory. Besides, a very difficult and concise writer like Aristotle, hard to understand even in the original Greek, demanded a rigorously literal rendering.

Like all translators of philosophical works into Latin, Moerbeke had to cope with the absence of adequate Latin terms. Repeatedly he simply transliterated the Greek words into the Latin alphabet. This condemned his Latin readers to guess at their meaning from the general context.²⁴ However, he did this less often as his proficiency in translating improved. Thus, in his early translation (c. 1260–64) of the first two books of Aristotle's *Politics* he resorted to more frequent transliterations than in his second, subsequent version. That later translation contained fewer mere transliterations of Greek terms and more attempts at providing Latin equivalents for words only transliterated in his first version.

The best medieval translations of Aristotle "were at least clear enough to allow for recovery of Aristotle's thought by patient and persistent readers".²⁵ Dante as a reader of Aristotle, and of Western theologians using Latin Aristotelian translations, provides a good example. He was not an academic teacher, but a careful reader of much contemporary theology and philosophy, not adhering to any one doctrine, but combining what best suited him. A list of key assumptions he attributed to Aristotle is impressively correct:

and it is not easy to find passages where scholars like Dante went seriously wrong through misinterpretation of Aristotle's meaning because of the insufficiency of literal translations.²⁶

Moerbeke's determination to produce fairly literal translations appear to have become more pronounced as his translating ventures progressed.²⁷ In some cases we can even reconstruct from his Latin versions the type of Greek original texts which he was using. This is certainly true of his translations of Aristotle's *De Caelo* and of the *De Fato* by Alexander of Aphrodisias.²⁸ In this last case we can tell from

²⁴ G. Verbeke in J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 7–10.

²⁵ W. Kneale (1986), ref. I.3, p. 452, summing up L. Minio-Paluello's conclusions.

²⁶ L. Minio-Paluello (1979), ref. I.9, pp. 63–6. On Dante's scholastic studies see especially K. Foster, "St. Thomas and Dante" in *The Two Dantes and Other Studies* (London, 1977), pp. 56–65.

²⁷ C. Steel (1982) cited in P. Thillet (1982–3), ref. II.14, p. 34 and n. 1.

²⁸ Nos. 9 and 34 in the Appendix to this chapter. For the translation of *On the*

Moerbeke's translation that he must have been using an old Byzantine manuscript in capital letters.

There is abundant other evidence of the scrupulous care of his translations. If, subsequently to his first version, he discovered fresh Greek manuscripts, he revised his first translation in the light of them.²⁹ He sometimes noted the Greek equivalents of Latin words when the Greek was hard to translate exactly. In his version of Alexander's *De Fato* we find the troublesome Greek words noted in the margin in the capital script of his Greek original.³⁰ The same is true of his version of ms. A of Archimedes, which dated from the ninth century A.D. We can tell from Renaissance copies of ms. A that it was written in a minuscule script, but without accents or breathing signs. These are similarly lacking in Moerbeke's marginal notes of troublesome Greek words in the autograph copy of his translation (ms.Vat.Ottobonianus lat.1850).³¹

While, ideally, he aimed at fairly literal translations, he departed from this frequently. Repeatedly he altered the order of words or inserted Latin words that could not have possibly corresponded to his Greek originals.³² He would have been surprised to learn that his translations would today be used frequently for reconstructing his Greek sources.

Despite the patient care displayed by Moerbeke in his translations, they were not entirely satisfactory, because he never fully achieved a mastery of classical Greek. Perhaps if we had more of the Greek manuscripts he was using (instead of only two), some of his errors could be accounted for by the abbreviations, lack of accents and general illegibility of some of his texts. This might mitigate in some cases, but cannot remove, the general conclusion that his knowledge of Greek was insufficient. His grasp of Greek grammar remained defective and so was his knowledge of Greek vocabulary. This appears clearly in his translations of the Neoplatonist Proclus in 1268 and even as late as 1280: E. R. Dodds, in editing the Proclian *Elements*

Sky (De Caelo) see P. Moraux (1965), ref. II, pp. CLXXXVIII-IX and for *De Fato* cf. P. Thillet (1982-83), ref. II.14.

²⁹ B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, p. 495 (*Politics*); *ibid.*, n. 23 (*Rhetoric*).

³⁰ P. Thillet (1982-3), ref. II.14, p. 33 and n. 1, pp. 41-2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-4. For the original ms. A as revealed by later copies cf. E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. II, p. 690. The translation of Archimedes is no. 17 in the Appendix to this chapter.

³² M. Untersteiner (1980), ref. I.11, pp. 195-96.

of *Theology*, commented on Moerbeke's 1268 translation that his "own scholarship was not of high order".³³ L. G. Westerink, speaking of his rendering in 1280 of Proclus' *Tria Opuscula*, was even harsher. He noted that Moerbeke "is at his best in philosophical terminology, but there are blunders even there. Outside this limited field he is often completely lost".³⁴ These are the judgements of two outstanding scholars, as were the similar criticisms of M. Untersteiner.³⁵ M. Clagett, in discussing his translations of Archimedes, confirmed that Moerbeke's "competence in mathematics remained mediocre". His abstention from translating some treatises in his two Archimedean manuscripts may have been due to the recognition that they were beyond his comprehension. In particular, the complexity of the mathematics in them may have defeated him.³⁶

With a few exceptions (especially the Aristotelian *Politics* and *Poetics*) the Latin versions of Moerbeke do not add many superior readings to the texts known from other sources. However, in a few cases his translations constitute today our sole versions of works for which the original Greek text is now lost. These include: the complete text of the Archimedean treatise *On Floating Bodies* (from ms. B, only preserved, in part, by Moerbeke's translation);³⁷ the last part of book VII of the Commentary by Proclus on Plato's *Parmenides*; the end of book I of the Commentary by Simplicius on Aristotle's *De Caelo*; Pseudo-Philoponos (probably Stephen of Alexandria) *De Intellectu*.³⁸

There is nothing to indicate that Moerbeke understood the philosophical evolution of the ancient doctrines about Aristotle's teachings and the extent to which in late antiquity the Neoplatonists were engaged in explaining away possible conflicts between Plato and Aristotle.³⁹ The contemporary Byzantine scholars could not be of any help here. He was simultaneously making available to the Latin

³³ E. R. Dodds (ed.), *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1963), p. XLIII.

³⁴ L. G. Westerink in *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 15 (1962), p. 189.

³⁵ M. Untersteiner (1980), ref. I.11, pp. 194-95 and n. 66 on p. 195.

³⁶ M. Clagett (1976), ref. II.1, vol. I, pp. 49-51, 56.

³⁷ J. Heiberg discovered (and later edited), a partial, and repeatedly different, text of this treatise in a palimpsest of the tenth century A.D. Cf. his article in *Hermes*, 42 (1907), pp. 235-42. For Moerbeke's translations of Archimedes see no. 17 in the Appendix to this chapter.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 16, 20, 15a.

³⁹ Cf. the illuminating study by H. J. Blumenthal, "Neoplatonic elements in the *de Anima* commentaries" in R. Sorabji (1990), ref. II.13, pp. 305-24.

West genuine Aristotelian treatises, commentaries by men who adhered to authentic Aristotelian traditions (like Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistios), Neo-Platonic commentators on Aristotle like Simplicius (who, despite immense and scrupulous learning, was often fundamentally misleading in his interpretations of Aristotle), and original thinkers like Proclus (not primarily a student of Aristotle, and handling doctrines derived from him in ways that would have utterly puzzled their author).

This very wide variety of Moerbeke's translations was bound to affect their quality adversely. Only a translator who understood more clearly than Moerbeke was capable of doing the doctrinal differences and subtle nuances of conflicting assumptions in the philosophical labyrinth he was tackling could have done full justice to these texts or forged an adequate philosophical vocabulary for translating them all. This was beyond Moerbeke's capacity or that of any other Latin translator of his time.

III

The Byzantine background to Moerbeke's translations comprised many positive features, though also some negative ones. The positive features may have included his choice of Greek manuscripts and the decisions about the works that deserved translations. It is true that in each case Moerbeke was influenced by his knowledge of gaps among the existing Latin translations, or of earlier Latin versions which needed correction. Furthermore, he depended on the availability of Greek manuscripts. Often he may have relied mainly on his own judgement. But I conjecture that, repeatedly, he may have been influenced by well-informed, scholarly Byzantine advice.

Except for the *De Coloribus*, which may have been a work of Theophrastus, a disciple of Aristotle,⁴⁰ all Moerbeke's Aristotelian translations were of writings that we accept as genuine works of Aristotle. This contrasts strikingly with translations made between 1258 and 1266 for King Manfred of Sicily, which contained virtually no genuine Aristotelian works (translations by Bartholomew of Messina).⁴¹ Moerbeke's choices of the ancient commentaries on Aristotle which

⁴⁰ No. 33 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁴¹ L. Minio-Paluello (1970), ref. I.6, p. 272.

he decided to translate included a number of outstandingly important works. Some of the Byzantine manuscripts he used for his translations were particularly valuable.

The negative features of the Byzantine background included two major ones. Moerbeke repeatedly failed to decipher correctly some parts of his Greek manuscripts. Admittedly, as I shall try to show, he was using some defective or very puzzling *codices*. Perhaps Byzantine scholars known to him could not help him sufficiently. Still more serious was Moerbeke's ignorance of the historical and literary background of Aristotle and other ancient writers. This was also largely true of his possible Byzantine informants, though they were much more familiar than Moerbeke with leading ancient poets, like Homer, repeatedly cited by Aristotle.⁴² Some grave mistranslations of words, and misrepresentations of entire sentences, resulted from those two limitations in Moerbeke's scholarly equipment, and, no doubt, from other causes as well.⁴³

Perhaps Moerbeke's earliest Aristotelian translations were his Latin versions of a series of zoological writings. They show signs of inexperience if one compares them with his later translations of, for example, the *Politics* and the *Rhetoric*.⁴⁴

Moerbeke's rendering of the *De Partibus Animalium* was completed at Thebes in December 1259 or 1260.⁴⁵ His choice was excellent, as that zoological treatise forms an introduction to a series of biological writings. In book I Aristotle discusses the methods which should be adopted in such studies. It was designed as a theoretical treatise, to be followed by other more purely descriptive studies. In antiquity Galen, the most important and original medical writer during the time of the Roman Empire (active in the second half of the second century A.D.), treated it as the most fundamental of Aristotle's anatomical writings. It is a manual of comparative anatomy. Its central objective is to explain that the structure of each known animal assures its successful functioning.⁴⁶ Moerbeke used a good Greek manuscript related to our second oldest Aristotelian collection in

⁴² M. Untersteiner (1980), ref. I.11, pp. 194–95 and n. 71 on p. 196.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194–96.

⁴⁴ M. Grabmann (1946), ref. I.2, p. 191, citing L. Dittmeyer (1934).

⁴⁵ No. 1 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁴⁶ P. Louis (1957), Ref. II.8b, the Introduction; P. Moraux, "Galen and Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium*" in *Studies Presented to David M. Balme* . . . (Bristol, 1985).

ms.Par.gr.1853 of the tenth century, but he may have collated it with other *codices* of a different textual tradition.⁴⁷

L. Minio-Paluello assumed that a translation of some other biological treatises followed soon after (*c.* 1260). He expressly indicated this for Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* and *De Generatione Animalium*.⁴⁸ This would suggest that at this early date in Moerbeke's career as Aristotelian translator he had already been made aware, perhaps by his Byzantine contacts, of the importance of all these biological writings. The *Historia Animalium*, in its Byzantine form, is, indeed, the longest of all the extant Aristotelian treatises. It assembles a vast amount of evidence about types of differences between the various species of animals, including humans. The *De Generatione Animalium* is intended as a sequel to the more theoretical and speculative *De Partibus Animalium* (translated by Moerbeke in 1259 or 1260). It is concerned with the purpose of the organs of animal reproduction in all their variety.⁴⁹

Moerbeke's translation of the *Historia Animalium* was based on an unusual manuscript, closely related to the Florentine ms.Laur.87.4 of the late twelfth century, containing numerous readings peculiar to itself. P. Louis regarded it as a very valuable manuscript, one of the best exemplars of the first of the two textual families.⁵⁰ Ms.Laur.87.4 also contains the *De Generatione Animalium*,⁵¹ but it is as yet unknown whether Moerbeke used a similar manuscript for his translation.

His rendering of the two related treatises dealing with the motion of animals should be ascribed to the same period, as St. Thomas Aquinas used one of them in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, written between 1261 and 1264.⁵² These two treatises have different titles. One, the *De Incessu Animalium*, is factual and descriptive like the *Historia Animalium*. The second, the *De Motu Animalium* (cited by St. Thomas), is more theoretical, like the *De Partibus Animalium*, and aims at discussions of purpose.⁵³ There is no agreement among recent editors of these

⁴⁷ I. Düring (ed.), *Aristotle's De Partibus Animalium* (Göteborg, 1943), pp. 54–55; P. Louis (1957), ref. II.8b, pp. xxxix–xi.

⁴⁸ Nos. 6 and 7 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁴⁹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. I, pp. 203–5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 258 and P. Louis, ref. II.8a (1964), pp. XLVII, XLIX–L, LIII–IX.

⁵¹ Fryde, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 205.

⁵² No. 8 in the Appendix to this chapter; a catalogue of St. Thomas' works appended by I. T. Eschmann to E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London, 1957), p. 386.

⁵³ Fryde, vol. I, p. 205.

treatises about the textual traditions of the Greek sources of Moerbeke's translations.⁵⁴

Only 40 extant Latin manuscripts contain Moerbeke's translations of all the five biological treatises. The two works on the movement of animals came to be most popular among Latin scholars, as we have 237 *codices* containing copies of them.⁵⁵

Aristotle's *Meteorologica* is usually found in *codices* containing his four 'physical' treatises. All four have a common preoccupation with change and movement. The *Meteorologica* deals with a wide range of natural phenomena (including much geology and chemistry).⁵⁶ Moerbeke's translation of it was completed in April 1260 at Nicaea and his rendering of books I–III (out of four) was the first translation directly from Greek. He also produced a better fresh version of book IV, previously translated a century earlier in southern Italy by Henry Aristippus⁵⁷ Moerbeke's translation became very popular, as we know of 175 manuscripts containing it.⁵⁸

The Greek text used by Moerbeke is closely related to the version in the oldest surviving manuscript of the 'physical' treatises, the Vienna ms.Philos.gr.100 (9th century).⁵⁹ As Moerbeke is known to have used this manuscript at some stage in his life,⁶⁰ this was probably his source for the *Meteorologica*. One may conjecture that he owed the knowledge of this invaluable *codex* to some learned Byzantine.

At the same time Moerbeke also translated the Commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias (active *c.* 200 A.D.) on the *Meteorologica*,⁶¹ his only surviving commentary on one of the 'physical' treatises. As Vindob.Philos.gr.100 lacks any texts of commentaries,⁶² Moerbeke must have used some other manuscript.

Alexander was one of the most distinguished ancient commentators on Aristotle, writing within the authentic tradition of Aristotelian scholarship. In an introductory section he discussed the nature of

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 205–6, 258.

⁵⁵ B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982); p. 77 and n. 133.

⁵⁶ P. Louis (1982), ref. II.9, the Introductions to vols. I and II; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.9, vol. I, pp. 188, 191.

⁵⁷ L. Minio-Paluello (1972), ref. I.7, p. 57.

⁵⁸ No. 2 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁵⁹ P. Louis (1982), ref. II.9, p. XLVII.

⁶⁰ G. Vuillemin-Diem in J. Bruns and W. Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 135–36.

⁶¹ No. 3 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁶² List of contents on pp. 208–9 of H. Hunger, *Katalog der Griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, I (Vienna, 1961).

the *Meteorologica* "and the place of the treatise within a general classification of Aristotle's physical works".⁶³

Although Aristotle's *De Caelo*, his principal cosmological treatise, is also in ms.Vinob.Philos.gr.100 (family *b* of its text), Moerbeke used a different manuscript (family *a*) for his translation, executed probably between 1260 and 1262.⁶⁴ The text of Moerbeke's Greek source was closely related to the second oldest Byzantine *codex*, ms.Par.gr.1853 of the tenth century.⁶⁵ His translation of books III–IV was the first rendering of them directly from Greek. We know of 185 *codices* of his translation.

Two very important treatises of Aristotle, the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics* were probably dealt with by Moerbeke during the same period.⁶⁶ They were closely connected and they were frequently combined in the same *codices*. In the case of the *Physics* its 8 books were merely revised by Moerbeke, using a translation by James of Venice about a century earlier. What he did with the *Metaphysics* was more complex.

The *Physics* formed an introduction to all Aristotle's discussions of natural and perishable things. The initial four books discuss fundamental physical concepts.⁶⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas used Moerbeke's version during the later stages of the writing of his Commentary on the Aristotelian *Physics*, completed by 1271.⁶⁸ Moerbeke used the venerable ms.Vindob.Philos.gr.100 but also some other *codex*. We know today of 230 *codices* containing his version.

The *Metaphysics*, preserved in the Byzantine tradition in 14 books,⁶⁹ is now the second largest Aristotelian treatise (surpassed only by the *Historia Animalium*). One manuscript (Cambridge ms.Peterhouse 22) contains a note mentioning revision of book 9 at Nicaea, which points to a date around 1260.⁷⁰ Moerbeke revised older translations of books 1–10 and 12. He then translated for the first time from

⁶³ R. W. Sharples in R. Sorabji, ref. II.13 (1990), p. 96. For Alexander see also section III of chapter 10.

⁶⁴ No. 9 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁶⁵ The textual traditions of the *De Caelo* are excellently discussed in P. Moraux (1965), ref. II.11, pp. CLXXXIII–LXXXIX.

⁶⁶ Nos. 4 and 5 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁶⁷ A. Mansion in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), p. 81; F. Solmsen, *Aristotle's System of the Physical World. A Comparison with his Predecessors* (Ithaca, 1960), pp. 71–2.

⁶⁸ Eschmann in Gilson (1957), *cit. supra*, pp. 401–2.

⁶⁹ No. 5 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁷⁰ J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, p. 335.

Greek books 11 and 14 as well as much of book 13. As with the *Physics*, he used ms.Vindob.Philos.gr.100, but he subsequently revised his first version from other sources. St. Thomas Aquinas used some of the newly translated books in a work dating probably from 1270.⁷¹

Thus a number of Moerbeke's most influential, new translations, and revisions of extant earlier versions, were carried out in the Greek lands, where he could enlist the help of Byzantine scholars. It is there that he acquired the confidence and the linguistic equipment enabling him to devote the rest of his scholarly career to translations from Greek.

IV

L. Minio-Paluello remarked of Moerbeke that "he can almost be considered the discoverer, for our civilization" of Aristotle's *Politics*.⁷² It was a treatise of scant interest to the men of late Antiquity. Subjects of autocratic Roman emperors would find little of interest in the study of long-vanished independent city states. That type of state was even more remote from Byzantine experience. The earliest known commentary was written by Michael of Ephesus in the first half of the twelfth century. Michael did not, of course, have either the interest or the information to explain the historical and political background of the *Politics*. But his commentary gave him an opportunity to criticize the evil rule, as he saw it, of Emperor John II (1118–43). He was writing for Anna Komnena, who had tried to dethrone and assassinate that imperial brother of hers (chapter 3).

Michael's commentary, like Aristotle's *Politics* remained very rare. It is worth stressing that, unlike his other commentaries, it is missing from the large collection of Aristotelian commentaries in the Florentine ms.Laur.85.1, probably compiled for Emperor Andronikos II.⁷³ Today only fragments of the commentary remain in a single *codex*.⁷⁴ No manuscripts of the *Politics* are known before the thirteenth century. At first Moerbeke was only able to find a fragment ending abruptly in chapter 11 of book 2, which he translated between 1260

⁷¹ Eschmann in Gilson (1957), *cit. supra*, p. 387; E. B. Fryde (1994), ref. II.3, pp. 958–59.

⁷² L. Minio-Paluello (1970), ref. I.6, p. 272.

⁷³ Above, section VI of chapter 3.

⁷⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. I, pp. 277–78.

and 1264.⁷⁵ It was considerably damaged and much in it puzzled him. He rendered quite a number of terms by words merely transliterating in Latin letters the Greek terms, either because he could not find Latin equivalents or, in some cases, because he may not have been sure what the Greek words meant.⁷⁶ One suspects that his Byzantine acquaintances could give him no help with a treatise so remote from their experience.

Subsequently, he found a complete manuscript of the *Politics* and translated it.⁷⁷ Later still, he came across yet another *codex* and used it to improve this translation.⁷⁸ The resultant version gives us a rendering textually better than any Greek *codices* now extant. Some of Moerbeke's version alone preserves what seems to have been Aristotle's actual text.⁷⁹ This final recension is, of course, a marked improvement on Moerbeke's first translation. There are more Latin equivalents of Greek terms and explanations of what the Greek words meant.⁸⁰

However, Moerbeke could not avoid errors springing from his ignorance about ancient Greek society and institutions. Thus, he translated by the term *honorabilitas*, by which he meant the superior social elite, the word in Aristotle (*timema*) meaning people of a superior "property qualification".⁸¹ Similarly, in his correction of an earlier version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (closely related to the *Politics*), Moerbeke translated as an act of the judge effecting justice ('justificatio') a Greek word (*dikaion*) by which Aristotle meant "the correction of an act of injustice".⁸² These two examples do not amount to shocking errors, but they are instances of Moerbeke misunderstanding institutions and social structure. He lapsed into errors also through some purely verbal mistranslations. Thus, in book III of the *Politics*, where the context demands the translation of Aristotle's *hisos* as 'equally', Moerbeke used a possible, different rendering of the same word as 'perhaps' (*forte*).⁸³

⁷⁵ No. 10a in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁷⁶ G. Verbeke (1989) in ref. I.1, pp. 6–8.

⁷⁷ No. 10b in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁷⁸ B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, vol. II, p. 495 and n. 22.

⁷⁹ L. Minio-Paluello (1974), ref. I.8, p. 438; M. Untersteiner (1980), ref. I.10, pp. 199–200.

⁸⁰ G. Verbeke (1989) in ref. I.1, pp. 7–10.

⁸¹ A. Gewirth (1964), ref. II.5, vol. I, p. 180 and n. 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. II (1956), p. LXXXIV.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 142 and n. 45.

While in Byzantium the Aristotelian *Politics* continued to be neglected, Moerbeke's Latin version became extremely popular in Western Europe. 107 copies are extant today. Between 1269 and 1272 St. Thomas Aquinas wrote a Commentary on books I and II as well as a part of book III.⁸⁴ In it he took over Moerbeke's translation describing man as a social animal (*animal civile*).⁸⁵ This was the core of Aristotle's political message enthusiastically endorsed by St. Thomas.

The political treatise written in medieval Western Europe most influenced by Aristotle was the *Defender of the Peace*, completed by Marsiglio of Padua on 24 June 1324,⁸⁶ and justifiably denounced by the Catholic church as a most abhorrent attack on it. Its Discourse I depends on Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* as its principal inspiration,⁸⁷ though Aristotle would have been astonished by this application of his very different preoccupations. The Byzantine contemporaries of Marsilio would have been equally horrified by his treatment of relations between church and state.

V

A variety of Aristotelian treatises were translated or revised by Moerbeke in the twelve-sixties, though it is seldom possible to date his version precisely. One of the most important of his revisions was his adaptation of the *De Anima*. This has been translated by James of Venice in c. 1160–70 and Moerbeke revised it probably before 1268. James had used a text (or texts) related closely to two of our oldest mss., Par.gr.1853 of mid-tenth century and Parisian Coislin gr.386 of the eleventh century. For his revision Moerbeke used one or more *codices* related to mss. different from James' sources and giving readings affiliated to a number of textual traditions.⁸⁸ His revision of the *De Anima* became the most widely disseminated of his Latin versions and we know today of 268 manuscripts.

⁸⁴ Eschmann in Gilson (1957), *cit. supra*, pp. 398, 405.

⁸⁵ A. P. D'Entrèves, *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought* (New York, 1959), p. 25, n. 1.

⁸⁶ A. Gewirth (1964), ref. II.5, vol. I, p. 21 and n. 13.

⁸⁷ On Marsilio see especially C. W. Previt -Orton, "Marsilius of Padua", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 21 (1935), pp. 137–183; A. Gewirth (1964), ref. II.5, vol. I.

⁸⁸ No. 13a in the Appendix to this chapter. For the types of manuscripts used by James and Moerbeke see L. Minio-Paluello, "Le texte du *De Anima* d'Aristote: la tradition latine avant 1500", in *Autour d'Aristote* (Louvain, 1955), pp. 220–23, 228.

The *De Anima* opened up Aristotle's series of writings on human psychology and discussed the fundamental problems of the unique nature of the human beings and of the relationship between their physical bodies and what Aristotle regarded as their souls. This was of crucial interest to St. Thomas Aquinas.

The *De Anima* formed an introduction to seven fairly short treatises, called collectively the *Parva Naturalia*. Moerbeke appears to have revised earlier translations of them during the twelve-sixties.⁸⁹ Surviving manuscripts of particular works range between 149 and 161.

The only surviving commentary by Alexander of Aphrodisias on one of those treatises deals with the *De Sensu et Sensibili*. Moerbeke translated it (before 1274) from a text older and better than any extant Greek manuscript.⁹⁰

He dealt with only some of the logical treatises of Aristotle. Possibly he was convinced that the knowledge of them was already sufficiently widespread in Western Europe. A very large number of the earliest translations of them by Boethius (1st quarter of the sixth century A.D.) still exist today.⁹¹ There also existed subsequent translations of some of them into Latin, partly by unknown translators, but mostly by James of Venice in the middle of the twelfth century.⁹²

In March 1266 Moerbeke translated the *Categories*, intended by Aristotle as an elementary introduction to logical works, and he translated at the same time a commentary of Simplicius. We have ten manuscripts of each of these translations.⁹³

The commentary by Simplicius was an admirable choice for translation. It may have been one of his last writings, some time in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D. He wrote with clarity and precision and was immensely erudite. The preface to his commentary is, probably, the most remarkable piece of writing that Simplicius has left to us. It is intended as a general introduction to Aristotle's works and provides invaluable historical information about earlier commentators on Aristotle. What is known about the lost earlier commentaries on the *Categories* is mainly based on it.⁹⁴ Moerbeke's

⁸⁹ No. 31 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 32.

⁹¹ B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982), pp. 74–5.

⁹² L. Minio-Paluello (1965), ref. I.5, pp. 611–12.

⁹³ Nos. 11–12 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. I, pp. 215, 240. For Simplicius see also section III of chapter 10.

choice of this work was, perhaps, a tribute to the expert scholarship of his Byzantine contacts.

In the complete collections of Aristotle's logical writings the *Categories* were usually followed by a short work, *On Interpretation*, partly concerned with grammatical and linguistic usage. Moerbeke translated it in 1268, as well as a Commentary by Ammonius, the Alexandrian teacher of Simplicius.⁹⁵ We also have texts of revisions by Moerbeke of earlier translations of two other Aristotelian logical treatises, the *Sophistical Refutations*, which an ancient biographer of Aristotle described as a tract on "disloyal dialectical techniques", and the much more important *Posterior Analytics* dealing with methods of logical demonstration, modelled on mathematical proof, and with defining the basic principles of valid scientific inquiry. We do not know the date of these last two revisions. That of the *Sophistical Refutations* was not very thorough, but the revision of the *Posterior Analytics* was very systematic.⁹⁶ It is one of Aristotle's most difficult works and St. Thomas Aquinas is virtually the only scholar who is known to have used Moerbeke's translation.⁹⁷

Moerbeke's translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* dated probably from before 1270.⁹⁸ His initial version was revised by using another manuscript.⁹⁹ In composing his *Rhetoric* Aristotle was reacting against what he and Plato regarded as a degraded use of rhetoric by Isocrates and other fashionable Athenian teachers and was trying to formulate what should be its underlying philosophical principles.¹⁰⁰ The Byzantine school teachers apparently regarded it as too theoretical and altogether too difficult for routine use. There was no significant revival of interest in it during the early Palaeologan Renaissance, though a small number of manuscripts containing it survive from that period.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 210, nos. 14a and 14b in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹⁶ Fryde, *ibid.*, pp. 210–11; nos. 27–28 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹⁷ L. Minio-Paluello (1972), ref. I.7, pp. 155–63.

⁹⁸ No. 25 in the Appendix to this chapter.

⁹⁹ B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, vol. II, p. 495, n. 22.

¹⁰⁰ F. Solmsen, *Die Entwicklung der Aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 196–229; R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 68, 79.

¹⁰¹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. I, p. 220, citing F. Solmsen, "The Aristotelian tradition in ancient rhetoric", in *American Journal of Philology*, 62 (1941). There is a list of Greek manuscripts in R. Kassel, *Der Text der Aristotelischen Rhetorik* (Berlin-New York, 1971), pp. 2–18.

Moerbeke's Latin version had a much better fortune in the Latin West. The modern list of *Aristoteles Latinus* enumerates 100 manuscripts of it. His Greek sources contained a very eclectic version, derived from several branches of the textual tradition, but some modern editors regard it as one of the most useful texts, second in value only to the tenth-century version in ms.Par.gr.1741.¹⁰² Sir William Ross, who was more distrustful of Moerbeke, admitted however that in some places Moerbeke alone appeared to preserve Aristotle's authentic text.¹⁰³ It should be noted that a late, but very good version of the *Rhetoric*, closely related to Moerbeke's lost sources, was copied by Marco Musuro, one of the most distinguished collaborators in the early editions (around 1500) of the Aldine press at Venice.¹⁰⁴

VI

By 1267 political events in Italy had revolutionized Moerbeke's opportunities as a translator. On 26 February 1266 Charles of Anjou, the youngest brother of King Louis IX of France, defeated and killed King Manfred of Sicily. Subsequently Charles gave the Greek manuscripts from the royal Sicilian library to his ally, Pope Clement IV (1265–8). Moerbeke was residing in Clement's service at Viterbo.

Five of these volumes have been traced, while others can be identified in subsequent inventories of the papal library. The two volumes I have seen in the Biblioteca Laurenziana at Florence (mss.28.18 and 87.25) on the final flyleaves contain an abbreviated word *and'* written boldly in large letters and pale yellow ink.¹⁰⁵

The story of the Angevin gift to the Papacy has been accepted by leading experts on the Vatican library including R. Devreesse and P. Canart.¹⁰⁶ Regrettably, in 1983 it was challenged by A. Paravicini

¹⁰² R. Dufour (ed.), *Aristote. Rhétorique*, I (Paris, Budé coll., 1967), pp. 21–22. Ms.Par.gr.1741 is discussed above, chapter 2, section IV.

¹⁰³ Dufour, *ibid.* and W. D. Ross (ed.), *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Oxford, 1959), pp. VII–VIII.

¹⁰⁴ B. Schneider, *Die Mittelalterlichen Griechisch-Lateinischen Übersetzungen der Aristotelischen Rhetorik* (Berlin, 1971), p. 145; M. Sicherl, "Musuros Handschriften" in *Serta Turyniana* (Urbana, 1974), p. 605.

¹⁰⁵ There is a summary of the evidence in my article, Fryde, ref. II.3 (1994), pp. 954–55.

¹⁰⁶ Cited *ibid.*, p. 954, n. 3. P. Canart, reprinted in G. Cavallo, *Libri e Lettori nel*

Bagliani¹⁰⁷ and the denial that such a gift took place has been accepted as proven by some subsequent writers, including the contributors to the volume edited in 1989 by Brams and Vanhamel (I.1 of the references to this chapter). As this misguided challenge affects our views about the provenance of Moerbeke's Greek sources at Viterbo, the evidence requires some discussion.

Paravicini Bagliani claims that the abbreviation in the surviving volumes is *aud'* (*auditor*) and not *and'* (*andegavensis*). This is untrue. The middle letter is in all cases quite clearly *n*, not *u*. One of the other arguments is worth detailing, as it shows an astonishing ignorance of history. It is asserted that Charles could not have been referred to as *Andegavensis* ('of Anjou') because he bore the more prestigious titles of the king of Sicily and also count of Provence.¹⁰⁸ This ignores that in his time he was always styled Charles of Anjou. That county formed the core of his original endowment by his father, King Louis VIII of France. Charles' *apanage* of the counties of Anjou, Touraine and Maine consisted of the hereditary lands of an earlier Angevin dynasty, who had been kings of England since 1154. Philip Augustus, Charles' grandfather, had conquered these counties in 1202–4. Charles' *apanage* was thus the fruit of one of the greatest triumphs achieved by his ancestors.

Four of the manuscripts translated by Moerbeke between December 1267 and June 1271 contain this description *and* in subsequent catalogues of the papal library and one, which still survives, has it also on its flyleaf (Florentine ms.Laur.87.25). This sudden appearance of Moerbeke's translations from the Angevin *codices*, soon after the capture of King Manfred's library by Charles of Anjou, fits with all the other evidence for the Sicilian provenance of these manuscripts.

We know nothing about the origin of these Sicilian volumes; they may have been in Sicily for a long time. Thus, ms.Laur.87.25 was derived from a Byzantine *codex* of the eleventh century (possibly, however, through an intermediary).¹⁰⁹ These Sicilian manuscripts cannot throw any clear light on what was available in Byzantium in

Mondo Bizantino (Bari, 1982), pp. 145–6 and 220, no. 119 describes *and'* as indicating "la menzione d'origine *andegavensis*" quando essa figura nell' inventario della biblioteca papale di Perugia o sul manoscritto stesso".

¹⁰⁷ "La provenienza 'angoina' dei codici greci della biblioteca di Bonifacio VIII. Una revisione critica", *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica*, 26 (1983), pp. 27–69.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁹ Fryde (1994), ref. II.3, p. 953.

Moerbeke's time, but they testify to his excellent appreciation of what was worth translating.

The earliest of Moerbeke's translations from one of the Sicilian *codices* was of the paraphrase by Themistios (c. 317–c. 388 A.D.) of Aristotle's *De Anima*. Like his other Aristotelian writings, it dates from the middle of the fourth century, when Themistios was still a teacher, before turning into a leading imperial statesman and orator.

Moerbeke completed his version, translated from the Florentine ms.Laur.87.25, in November 1267.¹¹⁰ His choice of Themistios for speedy translation exemplified his good information about what was valuable among the writings of the ancient Aristotelian commentators. Themistios' paraphrase of the *De Anima* is the only surviving ancient work about this treatise by a writer not fundamentally influenced by Neoplatonic philosophical doctrines, one who was committed to explaining Aristotle's authentic teachings.

Themistios "wanted to make Aristotle understandable to everyone". Therefore he did not write commentaries on his works but paraphrased his texts, summarizing their philosophical content.¹¹¹ At the start of his paraphrase of the *De Anima* he explained that he was aiming "to follow Aristotle to clarify and, if necessary, expand him".¹¹² On some topics, like, for example Aristotle's concept of the human intellect, which particularly interested St. Thomas Aquinas, Themistios went far beyond a mere paraphrase and wrote what amounted to extended expositions.

St. Thomas Aquinas was profoundly aware of the theological and philosophical issues raised by Aristotle's *De Anima* and used it in his early works. He appears to have been the first Western scholar to study and cite Moerbeke's translation of Themistios' paraphrase of it, which he used in two late works, dating probably from 1270–71. These were writings directed against Averroes and his alleged Christian users: the short *Opusculum de Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas* (?1270) and a Commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*. St. Thomas regarded the refutation of these Averroist ideas to be of the utmost importance both on philosophical and Christian grounds.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 952–59. No. 13b in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹¹¹ G. Verbeke, "Themistius", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 13 (1976), p. 308.

¹¹² H. J. Blumenthal in R. Sorabji (1990), ref. II.13, p. 320.

¹¹³ There is an excellent statement of the importance for St. Thomas of the Aristotelian *De Anima* in E. Gilson, "Saint Thomas Aquinas", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 21 (1935). Cf. also my summary in ref. II.3 (1994), pp. 952, 957–59.

The Commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's *De Anima* is lost, but he composed later a separate work under that title incorporating in it much of the contents of his earlier Commentary.¹¹⁴ A part of book II of Alexander's *De Anima* came to be transmitted separately under the title of *De Fato*. The date of Moerbeke's translation of this fragment is unknown, but as he rendered it from a Greek original written in capital letters,¹¹⁵ one may conjecture that he was more likely to have found such a *codex* in the Greek lands than in Italy.

As mentioned before, the *De Anima* provides a basic introduction to seven short treatises on human perception and psychology, known collectively as the *Parva Naturalia*. The *De Sensu et Sensibili* appears to have been intended as the first of these, as it contains at the start an introduction to the remainder.¹¹⁶ Moerbeke revised an earlier version of the *De Sensu* (above, section V). At an unknown date he also translated the Commentary on it by Alexander of Aphrodisias.¹¹⁷ This is Alexander's only surviving Commentary on one of the *Parva Naturalia*; it was used by St. Thomas Aquinas.¹¹⁸

Moerbeke had translated Aristotle's *De Caelo* around 1260–62,¹¹⁹ probably still in Greece. The presence among the Sicilian gift of Charles of Anjou of a huge and distinguished commentary on the *De Caelo* by Simplicius,¹²⁰ allowed him to follow this up by translating the Simplician commentary. Moerbeke completed his Latin version of it at Viterbo in June 1271.¹²¹

The text of the *De Caelo* in Simplicius was based on a Greek manuscript similar to the one used by Moerbeke for his translation of this Aristotelian treatise (related to ms.Par.gr.1853). However, the commentary of Simplicius included quotations from the *De Caelo* in

¹¹⁴ P. Moraux, "Le *De Anima* dans la tradition grecque. Quelques aspects de l'interprétation du traité de Théophraste à Thémistius", in G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen (eds.), *Aristotle on the Mind and the Senses* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 297, 305.

¹¹⁵ P. Thillet (1982–83), ref. II.14, pp. 33–37. It is no. 34 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹¹⁶ A. Mansion, *Introduction à la Physique Aristotélicienne* (Louvain, 1946), p. 29.

¹¹⁷ No. 32 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹¹⁸ Eschmann in Gilson (1957), *cit. supra*, p. 403.

¹¹⁹ No. 9 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹²⁰ No. 601 in the inventory of the papal library at Perugia in 1311. Moerbeke's use of this volume was suggested by P. Moraux in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 49 (1967), p. 173, n. 7.

¹²¹ No. 20 in the Appendix to this chapter.

a manuscript (or manuscripts) much older than the text in ms.Par.gr.1853 and its relatives. Hence the exceptional value of the citations of Aristotle by Simplicius.¹²²

Simplicius' commentary was an eloquent statement of the Neoplatonic cosmology, minimizing differences between Plato and Aristotle.¹²³ He described Aristotle as Plato's truest pupil and claimed that such criticisms of Plato by Aristotle as can be found were directed not against Plato himself, but against those who failed to grasp Plato's real meaning.¹²⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas used Moerbeke's translation in his commentary on the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* (1270–72).¹²⁵ Subsequently he used it extensively in his own commentary on the Aristotelian *De Caelo*, left unfinished when he died on 7 March 1274. In it he accepted much of Simplicius' Neoplatonic doctrines while vigorously refuting things incompatible with Christianity, like the belief in the eternity of the world.¹²⁶

VII

Among the most exciting discoveries made by Moerbeke amongst the Sicilian Greek manuscripts were two mathematical *codices*. They contained almost all the surviving works of Archimedes, while much else had been lost. Archimedes (287–212 B.C.) was the greatest mathematical genius of antiquity. Moerbeke translated in the course of 1269, at Viterbo, most of what he found in those two *codices*: six treatises by Archimedes and two commentaries on the Archimedean writings by Eutokios (active in the sixth century A.D.).¹²⁷ Two items

¹²² D. J. Allan (ed.), *Aristoteles. De Caelo* (Oxford, 1936), pp. v–vi; P. Moraux (1954), ref. II.10, pp. 154, 179–80.

¹²³ Ph. Hoffman, "Sur quelques aspects de la polémique de Simplicius contre Jean Philopon . . ." [after 529 A.D.] in I. Hadot (1987), ref. II.7.

¹²⁴ H. J. Blumenthal in R. Sorabji (1990), ref. II.13, p. 306.

¹²⁵ A. Mansion, "Pour l'histoire du commentaire de St. Thomas sur la *Metaphysique* d'Aristote", *Revue Neoscholastique de Philosophie*, 27 (1925). For the date cf. D. Salmon, "Saint Thomas et les traductions latines des *Métaphysiques* d'Aristote", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 7 (1932), p. 114.

¹²⁶ F. Bossier, "Traductions latines et influences du Commentaire *In de Caelo* en Occident (XIII^e–XIV^e siècles)", in I. Hadot (1987), ref. II.7, particularly pp. 304–8.

¹²⁷ Nos. 17–19 in the Appendix to this chapter. There is a masterly discussion and edition of these Moerbeke translations in M. Clagett, *Archimedes in the Middle Ages*, vol. II (in 3 parts, Philadelphia, 1976). The list of his mathematical translations is *ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 1, pp. 63–4 and on the plate facing p. x. I owe thanks to my friend, Dr. V. Mavron for making available to me Clagett's vol. II.

were left out by him, one by Archimedes and one by Eutokios, probably because of Moerbeke's difficulties with their mathematics.¹²⁸

The two manuscripts translated by him are usually referred to as mss. A and B. To judge from good later copies (especially the Florentine ms.Laur.28.4 commissioned for Lorenzo de' Medici in 1491–92),¹²⁹ ms. A dated probably from the second half of the ninth century A.D.¹³⁰ It disappeared in the later sixteenth century but ms.Laur.28.4 and a few other Renaissance copies preserve most of its contents. However we find from those copies that bits of the original Greek text were so damaged by the fifteenth century that copyists either omitted altogether the decayed passages or left gaps within them. Moerbeke's Latin translations, two centuries earlier, allow us to reconstruct some of these losses. Thus, later copies lack the initial passage of the Archimedean *De Sphaera et Cyindro* and we depend entirely on Moerbeke for our recovery of it.¹³¹

Ms. B had disappeared already in the fourteenth century. The list of its contents can be partially reconstructed from Moerbeke's translations and, more fully, from a catalogue of the papal library drawn up in 1311.¹³² From it Moerbeke translated three treatises, using it as his primary text. In two cases he collated it with versions available also in ms. A. The Archimedean *On Floating Bodies*, present only in ms. B, was Moerbeke's least satisfactory translation and he clearly could not understand parts of it.¹³³ Fortunately, in 1899 J. L. Heiberg discovered it in a palimpsest text at Jerusalem (?10th century).¹³⁴ It is in many places different from the Greek text rendered by Moerbeke from ms. B. The gaps in this sole source of Moerbeke's Latin version can now be filled from Heiberg's discovery.¹³⁵

Moerbeke's translations of Archimedes and Eutokios are very uneven in quality. The variable state of preservation of the Greek texts partly accounts for this. But there are also some inexplicable

¹²⁸ Clagett, *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 55–6.

¹²⁹ A very careful copy, reproducing the archaic features of the original manuscript. Cf. E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. II, pp. 688–92, based on my inspection of this *codex*.

¹³⁰ List of contents in Clagett (1976), ref. II.1, vol. II. pt. 1, p. 55.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 3, p. 461.

¹³² *Ibid.*, vol. II. pt. 1, pp. 58–59.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 60.

¹³⁴ Ch. Mugler (ed.), *Archimède*, I (Budé coll., Paris, 1970), p. xx1; J. L. Heiberg, *Hermes*, 42 (1907), pp. 235–42.

¹³⁵ Clagett, vol. II, pt. 3, pp. 575, 577–78.

lapses on his part. Thus the numerous errors in his rendering from ms. A of the Archimedean "Measurement of the Circle" (*Circuli mensuratio*) could have been partly avoided if he had looked at the commentary on it by Eutokios, also present in ms. A, but which he did not translate. We do not know whether he had access to the twelfth-century translation from Arabic of that Archimedean treatise by Gerard of Cremona, which would also have helped him to avoid some errors.¹³⁶

We know nothing about the history of manuscripts A and B before 1266, but it is possible that they had been kept in the royal Sicilian library long before Moerbeke's time and should not be used in any discussion of the Byzantine scholarly Renaissance of the later thirteenth century. However, the autograph of Moerbeke's translation of the mathematical treatises can be identified. It is on fos. 7v–64 of ms. Vat. Ottobonianus lat. 1850.¹³⁷ This gives us a unique opportunity to study his methods of translating. He collated the mss. A and B whenever they could be compared. He noted the deficiencies of his sources though he repeatedly mistook satisfactory words or passages for faulty ones. He noted Greek words which caused him difficulties. Ms. Ottobonianus 1850 also contains the diagrams which he tried to reproduce from mss. A and B,¹³⁸ though only some of these drawings are reasonably correct.¹³⁹

However, it is M. Clagett's general conclusion that, in spite of his various errors and misunderstandings,

Moerbeke did produce a not unworthy translation, particularly when we consider the state of the text and lack of any similar Latin texts, which could have guided him toward understanding the mathematics involved.¹⁴⁰

Also, in 1269, at Viterbo, he was cut off from any expert help from the few Byzantine scholars who studied mathematics (cf. below Chapter 12 for Planudes and Chapter 17 for Pachymeres).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 51.

¹³⁷ It is the source of Clagett's text, printed *ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 82–384, followed by a Commentary on his edition, pt. 3, pp. 387–587. Clagett describes this manuscript in pt. 1, pp. 62–72. There is also a more recent discussion by R. Wielockx in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 113–133, which slightly supplements Clagett.

¹³⁸ Reproduced by Clagett, vol. II, pt. 3, pp. 590–640.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 78.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 52.

VIII

No dated translations by Moerbeke are known between June 1271 and October 1277 when he was still a member of the papal court. In March 1278, probably still at Viterbo, he translated Aristotle's *Poetics*.¹⁴¹ This is one of his most difficult translations and we need to check it with the Greek text in order to follow it satisfactorily.¹⁴²

The Byzantine tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics* parallels the story of the Aristotelian *Politics*. Both were almost entirely neglected by Byzantine scholars, but attracted Moerbeke's attention. The fortunes of their Latin translations became, however, very different. The *Politics* profoundly influenced Western scholars. But the Latin *Poetics* remained virtually unknown until Italian humanists in the fifteenth century suddenly became interested in this work of literary criticism. However, they used fresh Greek originals and Moerbeke's Latin translation continued to be neglected.

Originally the *Poetics* consisted of two books. But the second book seems to have been lost already in antiquity and only book I, dealing with tragedy, continued to be copied. The oldest surviving text of that first book is in ms.Par.gr.1741 of the tenth century. That ms. is the only Greek *codex* older than the probable Greek source of Moerbeke's translation. The wording of the *Poetics* in ms.Par.gr.1741 has obviously suffered from multiple corruptions and loss.¹⁴³ We can tell this because in the ninth century a Greek manuscript was rendered into Syriac, probably by Hunain ibn Ishak (d. 873), a very learned translator. From it, in the fourth decade of the tenth century, Abu Bishr Matta produced an Arabic version, preserved in ms.Par.arab.2346 of the eleventh century.¹⁴⁴ It contains a passage missing from ms.Par.gr.1741.

That passage is also present in the only other Greek manuscript earlier than the later humanistic *codices*. This is the Florentine ms. Riccardianus gr.46, copied in the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁵ Moerbeke's Greek source was more closely related to that *codex*, and to the Arabic

¹⁴¹ No. 22 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁴² M. Clagett, vol. II, pt. 1, p. 52.

¹⁴³ A. Rostagni (ed.), *La Poetica di Aristotele* (Turin, 1927), pp. xc-xciii, xcv. I discuss this manuscript above, chapter 2, section IV.

¹⁴⁴ C. Gallavotti, "Per il testo della Poetica di Aristotele", *Parola del Passato*, 9 (1954), pp. 322-23; L. Minio-Paluello (1965), ref. I.5, p. 619.

¹⁴⁵ Rostagni, *ed. cit.* (1927), p. xciii. Its contents are listed by G. Vitelli in *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 2 (1894), p. 503.

version than to ms.Par.gr.1741. Hence springs the value of Moerbeke's translation, which does offer some uniquely good readings.¹⁴⁶ The sort of errors and misunderstandings that we encounter in Moerbeke's Latin version suggest that he was translating from a *codex* difficult to decipher and written in a heavily abbreviated manner typical of some Byzantine manuscripts of the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries.¹⁴⁷

It should be added that neither Moerbeke's Greek source, nor ms.Riccardianus gr.46, had any known Greek descendants. All the remaining Greek *codices* date from the fifteenth century and were apparently derived from ms.Par.gr.1741.¹⁴⁸

Moerbeke's Latin translation was not widely copied. Perhaps, its text was too difficult. It is worth stressing that it was one of the few Aristotelian treatises totally unknown to Dante,¹⁴⁹ who presumably would have been interested in it if it had been available to him.

IX

As I explain in my chapter 10, one of the important features of philosophical learning during the Byzantine scholarly Renaissance after c. 1250, was the renewal of open admiration for Plato. One consequence of this was the reappearance of the study of some of the writings of the Neoplatonists of late antiquity, who tried to deduce from Plato's dialogues a coherent system of philosophical doctrines. That was, apparently, the Byzantine background to the ability of Moerbeke to rediscover some of the manuscripts of Proclus, the most voluminous expositor of this alleged Platonic system (cf. section IV of chapter 3). It should be stressed, however, that the Greek manuscripts used by Moerbeke were apparently older than the oldest *codices* of these writings surviving today. At least, this is the case with his sources for the Proclian *Elements of Theology* and the Commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ E. Lobel, "The Medieval Latin Poetics", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 17 (1931), p. 311.

¹⁴⁷ The Greek source of Moerbeke's translation and the quality of his rendering of the *Poetics* are excellently discussed by A. Colonna in *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica*, new ser. 35 (1957), pp. 372-81. On the probable features of his Greek original see especially pp. 374, 377-79.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. E. Lobel, *The Greek Manuscripts of Aristotle's Poetics. Supplement to the Transactions of Oxford Bibliographical Society*, no. 9 (Oxford, 1933).

¹⁴⁹ L. Minio-Paluello, (1979), ref. I.9, p. 65.

¹⁵⁰ E. R. Dodds (ed.), *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1963), pp. XLII-XLIII; M. Grabmann (1936), ref. II.6, p. 418.

As was mentioned in section II of this chapter, Moerbeke's translations of Proclus are mediocre performances. His lack of necessary knowledge about the evolution of Greek philosophy in late antiquity, which I also stressed, contributed probably to these imperfect translations.

The *Elements of Theology* is the one Proclian treatise unlikely to have formed part of his routine teaching. His normal *curriculum* consisted of commentaries on particular Platonic dialogues. Unlike them, the *Elements of Theology* was the one systematic and "genuine exposition of Neoplatonic philosophical doctrines",¹⁵¹ arranged like a mathematical treatise of Euclid. It consists of 211 propositions and does not cite specific texts. Instead, it attempts to list and prove all the Platonic doctrines of universal significance.¹⁵²

Moerbeke completed his rendering of this treatise in May 1268, presumably at Viterbo.¹⁵³ His motives for selecting it for translation can only be a matter for conjecture. L. Minio-Paluello has drawn attention to one possible reason.¹⁵⁴ The West knew a treatise entitled *De Causis*, translated from Arabic in the twelfth century. It was very widely read and 202 Latin copies survive today.¹⁵⁵ Because it often formed part of collections of writings by Aristotle, or ascribed to him, it was regarded as an Aristotelian work.¹⁵⁶ Moerbeke may have been determined to disprove this. Moerbeke's translation of Proclus' *Elements* showed to St. Thomas Aquinas its true nature as an Arabic work derived from Proclus. St. Thomas pronounced this in his Commentary on *Liber de Causis*, written probably in 1270–71.¹⁵⁷

Three short treatises of Proclus on providence, fate and persistence of evil are lost in Greek, though some of their Greek contents are available in an attack on Proclus in the early twelfth century by Isaac, a member of the Komnenian family. Moerbeke's Latin version, completed in February 1280 at Corinth in Greece, where he resided as its archbishop, is our only complete text. Moerbeke's translation is inadequate and he was using an unsatisfactory Greek

¹⁵¹ Below, section VI of chapter 10.

¹⁵² H. D. Saffrey, "Proclus, Diadoque de Platon" in J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey (1987), ref. II.12, pp. xxi–xxii.

¹⁵³ No. 16 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁵⁴ L. Minio-Paluello (1965), ref. I.5, pp. 631–33.

¹⁵⁵ B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982), p. 79.

¹⁵⁶ M. Grabmann (1936), ref. II.6, p. 413.

¹⁵⁷ E. R. Dodds (*ed. cit.*, 1963), p. xxx, n. 1. For the date cf. Eschmann (*op. cit.*, 1957), p. 408.

source.¹⁵⁸ Some of the contents anticipate Proclus' later *Platonic Theology* and well repay study.¹⁵⁹

Proclus probably wrote commentaries on all the Platonic dialogues which he accepted as authentic. His commentaries on the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* were particularly important. Proclus, like other Neoplatonists, regarded those two dialogues as containing the essentials of what they interpreted (mistakenly) as Plato's coherent doctrinal system.¹⁶⁰ They could also be treated by Christians as anticipating important Christian doctrines. The *Timaeus* contains the myth of divine creation of the world, though many scholars think now that Plato never believed that it was more than a myth.¹⁶¹ The *Parmenides* was interpreted by the Neoplatonists as treating of the Supreme One, which Christians could equate with the Christian God, though really this part of the dialogue was only intended as an exercise in logic.¹⁶² Moerbeke might have learnt from his Byzantine contacts about the doctrinal importance attributed to these two dialogues by the Neoplatonists. Also, they obviously seemed specially acceptable to the Christians.

We only have fragments of Moerbeke's translation, at an unknown date, of Proclus' Commentary on the *Timaeus*.¹⁶³ But the Commentary on the *Parmenides* survives more fully in Moerbeke's translation than in the Greek exemplars. The last part of book 7 is preserved only in Moerbeke's version.¹⁶⁴ It may have been one of Moerbeke's last translations.¹⁶⁵

X

Moerbeke had virtually no successors. The repudiation of the Union of Lyons by Andronikos II as soon as he succeeded his father in

¹⁵⁸ No. 23 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁵⁹ L. G. Westerink cited *ibid.*; P. O. Kristeller in J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey (1987), ref. II.12, p. 199 and C. Guérard, *ibid.*, pp. 340–44.

¹⁶⁰ Saffrey in Pépin and Saffrey (1987), ref. II.12, p. xx.

¹⁶¹ L. Tarán, "The creation myth in Plato's *Timaeus*", in J. P. Anton and G. L. Kustas (eds.), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany, 1971).

¹⁶² E. R. Dodds, "The *Parmenides* and the Neoplatonic 'One'", *Classical Quarterly*, 22 (1928).

¹⁶³ No. 30 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no., 24; R. Klibansky, "Plato's *Parmenides* in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance", *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, I, no. 2 (1943), pp. 284–88; P. O. Kristeller in Pépin and Saffrey (1987), ref. II.12, pp. 200–1.

¹⁶⁵ M. Grabmann (1936), ref. II.6, p. 417.

December 1282 inaugurated a lasting alienation between the Latin West and Byzantium inimical to fruitful intellectual contacts. There were no Latin translations of any dialogues of Plato or of treatises and commentaries by ancient Neoplatonists before those of the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century.

Some mention must be made, however, of a work entitled the *Economics*. It is uncertain whether any of it can be attributed to Aristotle, though he may have been the author of book I. Book II may have been composed by someone connected with him and book III is of unknown origin. Some manuscripts of a Latin translation date it in 1295.

The manuscript used by the Latin translator was textually different from all the known Greek manuscripts and probably earlier than all the surviving Greek *codices*, none of which can be dated before the fourteenth century. Nothing is known about the provenance of the source used by the Latin translator.¹⁶⁶

Only Greek medical works continued to attract a succession of Latin translators. The one Latin version of a medical work that can be securely attributed to Moerbeke, and can be dated, was his rendering of Galen's *De Virtute Alimentorum* translated by him at Viterbo in October 1277, a few months before his promotion to the archbishopric of Corinth. He did this at the request of a doctor, Rosello of Arezzo.¹⁶⁷ It is a treatise on healthy diet.

Galen was regarded by Byzantines as the greatest medical authority inherited by them from the time of the early Roman Empire and Byzantine manuscripts of his work survive in large numbers (section VI of chapter 17). Among the Western translators Pietro d'Abano of Padua (d. c. 1315)¹⁶⁸ is known to have spent some time at Constantinople. Like his friend Marsilio of Padua (above, section IV), he was primarily an Aristotelian scholar. He travelled to Byzantium in search of manuscripts of the so-called *Problemata*, attributed to Aristotle, as he was writing a commentary on this collection of miscellaneous inquiries.¹⁶⁹ He brought back from Greece some treatises of Galen,

¹⁶⁶ B. A. Van Groningen (ed.), *Aristote. Le Second Livre de l'Économie* (Leiden, 1933) and his later edition (with A. Wartelle), *Aristote, Économie* (Paris, Budé Coll., 1968). For the independent textual tradition used in the Latin translation see Van Groningen (1933), pp. 32–3. I. Düring's authoritative study of Aristotle does not even mention the *Economics*. I am using the revised Italian edition, *Aristotele* (Milano, 1976).

¹⁶⁷ No. 21 in the Appendix to this chapter.

¹⁶⁸ G. Federici Vescovini in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, p. 84.

¹⁶⁹ N. Rubenstein, "Marsilius of Padua and Italian political thought of his time"

but there is as yet no certainty about the ones he subsequently translated into Latin. Marie Thérèse d'Alverny thought that the Venetian ms. Marcianus gr. 276 might be one of the *codices* that he had carried to Italy. It dates from around 1300 and may be the source of his partial translation of one of Galen's most important works, *Method of Healing*, in fourteen books.¹⁷⁰

That treatise had been partly translated from Greek in the second half of the twelfth century by Burgundio of Pisa. There had been also in roughly the same period a complete translation from Arabic by Gerard of Cremona. Pietro d'Abano, who was notoriously distrustful of Arabic sources, preferred to revise and complete Burgundio's translation.¹⁷¹ Several other treatises of Galen were also translated by Pietro, perhaps using *codices* brought from Constantinople.

The largest group of translations from Greek of medical works was executed a generation later in southern Italy by Niccolò di Reggio. He was the doctor of King Robert I of Naples and we have his Latin versions of some 30 medical treatises translated for his royal master. Only Galen's *De Compositione Medicamentorum Secundum Locos* can be securely traced to a Greek original given by Andronikos III to King Robert shortly after 1331. Niccolò may have been a native Greek speaker and his Latin was not very good.¹⁷²

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I. *Translations by William of Moerbeke: General*

1. J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (eds.), *Guillaume de Moerbeke* . . . (Leuven, 1989). See especially the Introductory study by G. Verbeke, pp. 1–21. The detailed bibliography, *ibid.*, pp. 301–8 is not always reliable.
2. M. Grabmann, *Guglielmo di Moerbeke, O.P., il Traduttore delle Opere di Aristotele* (Rome, 1946).
3. W. Kneale, "Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, 1907–1986", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 72 (1986).
4. L. Minio-Paluello, "L'Aristotele Latinus", *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser., 1 (1960).
5. L. Minio-Paluello, "Aristotele dal Mondo Arabo a quello Latino", *L'Occidente e l'Islam nell'Alto Medioevo*, vol. II (Spoleto, 1965).
6. L. Minio-Paluello, 'Aristotele', *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 1 (1970).
7. L. Minio-Paluello, *Opuscula: the Latin Aristotle* (Amsterdam, 1972).
8. L. Minio-Paluello, "Moerbeke, William of", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 9 (1974).

in J. Hale, R. Highfield and B. Smalley (eds.), *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), pp. 49–50; M. T. D'Alverny (1994), ref. II.2, p. 39, n. 55 and p. 40.

¹⁷⁰ D'Alverny, *ibid.*, p. 40 and n. 57.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 41–6 and see section VI of chapter 17.

9. L. Minio-Paluello, "Dante's reading of Aristotle" in C. Grayson (ed.), *The World of Dante* (Oxford, 1979).
10. A. Pattin, "Pour la biographie de Guillaume de Moerbeke", *Angelicum*, 66 (1989).
11. M. Untersteiner, *Problemi di Filologia Filosofica* (Milan, 1980), pp. 191–203.

II. *Translations from Greek into Latin: Particular Works*

1. M. Clagett, *Archimedes in the Middle Ages*, vol. II, pts. I–III (Philadelphia, 1976).
2. M. T. D'Alverny, "Pietro d'Abano, traducteur de Galien", no. XIII in *La Transmission des Textes Philosophiques et Scientifiques au Moyen Age* (ed. C. Burnett, *Variorum* reprints, Aldershot, 1994).
3. E. B. Fryde, "The paraphrase by Themistios of Aristotle's *De Anima* and St. Thomas Aquinas", *English Historical Rev.*, 109 (1994).
4. E. B. Fryde, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510*, vols. I and II (Aberystwyth, 1996).
5. A. Gewirth, *Marsilius of Padua. The Defender of Peace* (vol. I, 2nd ed., New York, 1964; vol. II, 1956).
6. M. Grabmann, "Die Proklosübersetzungen des Wilhelm von Moerbeke und ihre Verwertung in der Lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters", *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, II (München, 1936).
7. I. Hadot (ed.), *Simplicius. Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre, Sa Survie* (Berlin-New York, 1987).
8. (a) P. Louis (ed.), *Aristote. Histoire des Animaux*, I (Budé Coll., Paris, 1964); (b) P. Louis (ed.), *Aristote. Les Parties des Animaux* (Budé Coll., Paris, 1957).
9. P. Louis (ed.), *Aristote. Météorologiques*, I (Budé Coll., Paris, 1982).
10. P. Moraux, "Notes sur la tradition indirecte du *De Caelo* d'Aristote", *Hermes*, 82 (1954).
11. P. Moraux, *Aristote. Du Ciel* (Budé Coll., Paris, 1965).
12. J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey (eds.), *Proclus, Lecteur et Interprète des Anciens* (Paris, 1987).
13. R. Sorabji, *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London, 1990).
14. P. Thillet, "Éléments pour l'histoire du texte du *De Fato* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise", *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, XII–XIII (1982–83).
15. J. Wiesner (ed.), *Aristoteles, Werk und Wirkung. Paul Moraux gewidmet*, II (Berlin, 1987).

APPENDIX to Chapter 7

A Table Listing the Translations from Greek into Latin by
William of Moerbeke (?1259–c. 1286)

The initial part of the list consists of translations that can be dated approximately, arranged in a roughly chronological order.

Some translations of which only fragments remain have been left out and likewise most of the works where translation by Moerbeke cannot be proven.

The list is based primarily on a scrutiny of the evidence assembled by M. Grabmann in *Guglielmo di Moerbeke, O.P., il Traduttore delle Opere di Aristotele* (Rome, 1946) and on the revisions and corrections by L. Minio-Paluello, "Moerbeke, William of", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 9 (1974), pp. 436–38. I have also included citations of other relevant publications. The statistics of known Latin Aristotelian manuscripts are based on the *Aristoteles Latinus* and are derived from a list by B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 74–79.

The statistics of translations of the writings of Proclus are based on P. O. Kristeller in J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey (eds.), *Proclus, Lecteur et Interprète des Anciens* (Paris, 1987), pp. 197–99.

This list is divided into the following sections:

Text

Date and place of translation or revision

Manuscripts used

Number of known Latin mss.

Further sources and remarks

1. Aristotle, *De Partibus Animalium*, translation

Dec. ?1259 (or 1260) at Thebes in Greece

Ms. related to ms.Par.gr.1853 of 10th century (possibly collated with other mss.)

See section III above

I. Düring (ed.), *De Partibus Animalium* (Göteborg, 1943), pp. 54–55

2. Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, 4 books, translation of books 1–3, revision of earlier translation of book 4
 April 1260, at Nicaea in Asia Minor
 Ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100 of 9th century
 175
 A. Pattin, *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), p. 392; G. Vuillemin-Diem in J. Brams and W. Vanhamel ref. I.1 (1989), pp. 135–36

3. Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, translation
 April 1260 at Nicaea
 —
 9
 Pattin, *ibid.*, p. 392

4. Aristotle, *Physica*, 8 books, revision of a translation by James of Venice (third quarter of the 12th century)
 Around 1260 (? at Nicaea)
 Probably at least 2 mss., including ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100 of 9th century
 230
 A. Mansion, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), p. 81; G. Vuillemin-Diem in J. Brams and W. Vanhamel ref. I.1 (1989), pp. 185–87

5. Aristotle's, *Metaphysica*, books 1–10, 12, revision of older translations; books 11, 14 and much of book 13 earliest translation from Greek
 Probably in 1260 at Nicaea, Moerbeke later revised it gradually (partly by c. 1265)
 Ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100, supplemented in later revision by other sources
 217
 M. Grabmann (1946), ref. I.2, pp. 98–99; G. Vuillemin-Diem in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15 vol. II, pp. 434–86

6. Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, books 1–9, translation. There is controversy about whether Moerbeke translated book 10
 c. 1260
 —
 See section III above

L. Minio-Paluello, *Luoghi Cruciali in Dante e Ultimi Saggi* (Spoleto, 1993), p. 79; W. Vanhamel in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), p. 331

7. Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium*, translated
c. 1260

—
Ibid.

L. Minio-Paluello, *ibid.*, p. 92

8. Aristotle, *De Motu Animalium* and *De Progressu Animalium*, translation

De Motu . . . translated by 1261–64 and *De Progressu* . . . possibly the period

—
Ibid.

De Motu Animalium cited by St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1261–64). Cf. I. T. Eschmann (*op. cit.* in Gilson, 1957), p. 387

9. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, 4 books. Earliest translation from Greek of books 3 and 4. In books 1–2 Moerbeke revised an earlier translation by Bishop Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln

c. 1260–62

A good manuscript related to ms.Par.gr.1853 of 10th century. Possibly checked with ms.gr.1853 of 10th century. Possibly checked with ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100 of 9th century 185

P. Moraux (ed.), *Aristote, Du Ciel* (Paris, 1965), pp. CLXXXVIII–IX. The suggestion about checking with ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100 by G. Vuillemin-Diem in J. Wiesner (1987), ref. II.15, vol. II, pp. 477–78. It requires confirmation

- 10a. Aristotle, *Politics*, book 1 and book 2 up to chapter 11, translation

c. 1260–64

A manuscript containing no more and much damaged

3

G. Verbeke in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 6–20

10b. *Politics* (complete), translation

By c. 1272 (used in the Commentary on *Politics* 1–3 of St. Thomas Aquinas)

A much better translation of books 1–2. Use of manuscripts better than the existing Greek mss.

107

Verbeke, *ibid.*; B. Schneider in J. Wiesner (1987), ref.

II.15, vol. pp. 487–97

11. Aristotle, *Categoriae*, translation

March 1266, possibly at Viterbo

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10

Pattin, *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), p. 393

12. Simplicius on Aristotle's *Categoriae*, translation

March 1266

—

10

M. Grabmann in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Philologie des Mittelalters*, 17 (1916), p. 148

13a. Aristotle, *De Anima*, revision of a translation by James of Venice (c. 1160–70)

?Before 1268

Moerbeke used one or several manuscripts in his revision
268

B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 76; L. Minio-Paluello in *Autour D'Aristote* (Louvain, 1955), pp. 226–27

13b. Themistios on Aristotle's *De Anima*, translation

Dec. 1267, at Viterbo

Florence, ms.Laur.87.25, from the royal Sicilian library

8

E. B. Fryde in *English Historical Review*, 109 (1994), pp. 952–59

14a. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, translation

1268, at Viterbo

4

Pattin, *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), p. 394

- 14b. Ammonius, Commentary on it, translation
Sept. 1268, at Viterbo

4

Ibid.

- 15a. Pseudo-Philoponos (probably Stephen of Alexandria). Fragment of a Commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* (book III, 4–9). Cited separately as *De intellectu*, translation

Dec. 1268, at Viterbo

Badly damaged ms.

3

Moerbeke selected this fragment for translation because of its philosophical significance; G. Verbeke, *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 49 (1951), pp. 221–35 and in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 4–6

- 15b. Fragment of the genuine Commentary of Philoponos on *De Anima* (book I, 3), translation

Unknown date

H. J. Blumenthal in R. Sorabji (1990), ref. II.13, p. 311 and n. 3

16. Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, translation
May 1268, at Viterbo

27

Pattin, *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), p. 394

17. Archimedes (3rd century B.C.), 6 treatises, commentaries on 2 of them by Eutokios (6th century A.D.), translations
1269, at Viterbo

Mss. A. and B. of Archimedes, from the royal Sicilian library (ms. B. in the 14th century, and Moerbeke's 3

translations from it our only source for these versions); ms. A. lost in the 16th century, but there are 4 copies of it (15th and 16th centuries)

—
Moerbeke's autograph translation in ms. Vat. Ottobonianus Lat. 1850. Edited by M. Clagett (1976), ref. II.1, 3 parts in 2 vols.; E. B. Fryde, *Greek Mss. of the Medici* (1996), II, 688–91

18. Heron of Alexandria, *De Speculis*, translation
Late 1269, at Viterbo
Ms. B. of Archimedes

—
Clagett, *ibid.*, pt. 1, p. 58

19. Ptolemy of Alexandria (2nd century A.D.), *De Analemmate* (on sundials), translation (our only source of its text)
Late 1269, at Viterbo
Ms. B. of Archimedes

—
Clagett, *ibid.*, pt. 1, pp. 58, 65; G. J. Toomer, "Ptolemy", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 11 (1975), p. 197

20. Simplicius on Aristotle's *De Caelo*, translation. End of book I extant only in Moerbeke's Latin version
June 1271, at Viterbo
From the royal Sicilian library

4

Pattin in *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), p. 396; F. Boissier in I. Hadot (ed.), *Simplicius* (Berlin-New York, 1987), p. 321

21. Galen (2nd century A.D.), *De Virtute Alimentorum*, translation
Oct. 1277, at Viterbo

—
—
M. T. D'Alverny, *Transmission des Textes Philosophiques et Scientifiques au Moyen Age* (1994), XIII, p. 27, n. 27

22. Aristotle, *Poetics*, translation
March 1278, probably at Viterbo

2

L. Minio-Paluello in *Opuscula* (ref. I.7, 1972), no. 3, pp. 40–56. See below, chapter 8, section IV

23. Proclus, *3 Opuscula: De Decem Dubitationibus, De Providentia et Fato, De Malorum Subsistentia* Moerbeke's Latin translation is our only complete text

Feb. 1280, at Corinth in Greece

13

L. G. Westerink, "Notes on the *Tria Opuscula* of Proclus", *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 15 (1962), pp. 159–68 and *ibid.*, pp. 189–90

24. Proclus, Commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, translation

6

Pattin in *Angelicum*, 66 (1989), pp. 398, 401. Last part of Book 7, in the Greek manuscripts, now available only in Moerbeke's translation, Cf. H. D. Saffrey in *Philologus*, 105 (1961), pp. 317–21

25. Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, translation (two successive recensions)

?Before 1270

An eclectic text, combining several textual traditions

100

W. D. Ross (ed.), *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* (Oxford, 1959), p. xiii; B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982), p. 78

26. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. ?Possibly revision

247 mss. of this revised version, perhaps attributable to Moerbeke

L. Minio-Paluello, on linguistic grounds, believed that Moerbeke revised the translation by Bishop Robert

Grosseteste (*Dict. Scientific Biography*, 9, p. 437). This is doubted by G. Verbeke in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, p. 1

27. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*. Revised of an earlier translation by James of Venice (third quarter of the 12th century)
c. 1269, or earlier

—
4

A very systematic revision. Cf. W. Kneale, "Lorenzo Minio-Paluello", *Proc. of Brit. Academy*, 72 (1986), pp. 447, 449–50; B. G. Dod in *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982), p. 75

28. Aristotle, *Sophistici Elenchi*. A partial revision of an earlier translation
c. 1269, or earlier

—
1

Dod, *ibid.*, p. 75

29. Aristotle, *De Generatione et Corruptione*. Perhaps revised by Moerbeke, using an earlier anonymous translation
Before 1274

—
190

Dod, *ibid.*, p. 76

30. Extracts from the Commentary by Proclus on Plato's *Timaeus*

—
—
A few mss.

It is unknown whether Moerbeke translated more than the extracts now extant. Cf. P. O. Kristeller in Pépin and Saffrey (*op. cit.*, 1987), p. 199

31. Aristotle, *Parva Naturalia*, revision of earlier translations
?c. 1260–70

—
Mss. range between 149 and 161

A collection of 7 treatises on human psychology and behaviour. Listed in Dod (*op. cit.*, 1982), pp. 76–77

32. Commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias on *De Sensu et Sensibili* (his only surviving Commentary on one of the *Parva Naturalia*)
Before the death of Thomas Aquinas in March 1274

4

Translated from a manuscript older and superior to all the extant Greek codices. Cf. M. Grabmann (1946), ref. I.2, p. 183

33. Theophrastos (or an associate) *De Coloribus*, revision of an earlier translation
?c. 1260–70

1

Only a fragment survives. Dod (*op. cit.*, 1982), p. 79

34. Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. 200 A.D.), book II of *De Anima*, cited independently as *De Fato*, translation

Probably a ms. in capital letters, damaged at the start and the end

P. Thillet in *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, XII–XIII (1982–83), pp. 32–47. Translation appears to reproduce the Greek original well

35. Pseudo-Hippocrates, *De Prognosticationibus Aegritudinum Secundum Motum Lunae*, translation

L. Minio-Paluello, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 9 (1974), p. 438

36. List of 63 medical writings attributed to Hippocrates, copied by Moerbeke into ms.Vindob.philos.gr.100, fo. 137v

Probably derived from ms.Vat.gr.276 of the 12th century

G. Vuillemin-Diem in Brams and Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, pp. 137–40

CHAPTER EIGHT

PHILOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP, c. 1280–c. 1330: MAIN FEATURES

I

The concept of the Palaeologan Renaissance was first applied early in this century to the remarkable flowering of Byzantine art (cf. chapter 16, section IV). But it is equally applicable to the recovery and dissemination of Greek classical texts. This aspect of it has been described by G. Zuntz as “something of a miracle”.¹ It is one of those surprising triumphs of human achievement against adverse circumstances which fortunately recur in intellectual and artistic history. As P. Lemerle put it in concluding his fascinating lecture on the contribution of the Byzantines to our civilization, the legacy of ancient Greek literature and thought was for the Byzantines something very vital and precious.² The details of what it meant to different scholars of the Palaeologan Renaissance elude us, because of the paucity of relevant evidence. I shall try to look at some of this evidence, but nothing that we know can adequately account for this outburst of enthusiastic scholarship.

It is instructive to compare our period, especially the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328), with a revival of scholarship and culture in the second quarter of the eleventh century, especially in the reign of a great emperor, Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55). The reflections of P. Lemerle on what happened then, and continued, though less buoyantly until the 1080s, are valuable for both similarities and contrasts.³ Under Constantine IX, and in the decades which followed, there was more talk of learning and culture than

¹ I. Ševčenko, “Palaeologan Renaissance”, in W. Treadgold (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance. Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 150, 204; G. Zuntz, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 281.

² P. Lemerle, “Byzance et les origines de notre civilisation” in A. Pertusi (ed.), *Venezia e L'Oriente fra Tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Firenze, 1966), p. 17.

³ P. Lemerle, *Cinq Études sur le XI^e Siècle Byzantin* (Paris, 1977), pp. 245–46.

before, and among some members of the Constantinopolitan elite these things were again respected and regarded as part of an ideal progress. People who had profited from good education were likely to be promoted to high offices in state and church. The same thing happened under Andronikos II. In the eleventh century the content of scholarship had not increased markedly in contrast to the increased respect for it. Here the early Palaeologan Renaissance was different, with notable expansion in the recovery of ancient classics, partly missing hitherto, as well as improvements in techniques of recovering and editing valuable texts.

The features chiefly discussed in this chapter are the numerous innovations in the editing of the ancient dramatic and poetic works and in the commenting upon these texts. The greatest progress largely coincided with the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328). All modern scholars are agreed on that. Andronikos was very interested in some of the intellectual activities which came to form one of the chief glories of the early Palaeologan Renaissance. He appears to have favoured particularly the study of Greek philosophy and of some sciences, especially astronomy.

The editions of poets and dramatists and commentaries on them were largely connected with teaching in what might be described as schools of 'middle' higher education. Planudes, the most eminent of those teachers was active at a school, or a succession of schools, attached to imperial monasteries at Constantinople.⁴ Some of the leading ministers of Andronikos, like Nikephoros Chumnos and Theodore Metochites, were highly educated men and the latter (chief minister c. 1305–1328) was the author of a considerable body of astronomical, philosophical, rhetorical and poetic writings.⁵

In philosophy and science (especially astronomy) important new developments continued beyond 1330. While the early Palaeologan period was distinguished by some important historical writing (George Akropolites, George Pachymeres), historiography, too, continued to flourish thereafter, especially in the writings of Nikephoros Gregoras, friend and "literary executor" of Metochites (chapters 15, 18).

The overwhelming majority of the surviving manuscripts of Greek

⁴ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, pp. 68–71.

⁵ For Chumnos see especially J. Verpeaux, *Nicéphore Choumnos, Homme d'État et Humaniste Byzantin, ca. 1250/1255–1327* (Paris, 1959). For Metochites see chapters 16–17.

poets and dramatists is to be found in editions by scholars active between 1280 and 1330, written in that period, or copied later. Furthermore, the earliest known copies of a number of works date from the thirteenth or the fourteenth centuries. Many of these are products of the early Palaeologan Renaissance and a provisional list of them, compiled by H. Hunger, includes some very valuable writings.⁶ One important component of this last group was of ancient philosophical authors (chapter 10). Our texts of the speeches of four Attic orators of the late fifth and fourth centuries were possibly first transliterated in the late thirteenth century and copied, soon after, in the Brit.Lib.ms.Burney 95, by an official of the imperial chancery (Michael Klostomalles).⁷

At the start of chapter I I stressed that the intensified interest in ancient Greek literary legacy after 1261 was sustained by a reaction of the cultured Byzantine elite to a world where the very survival of the shrunken Byzantine state was under multiple threats from its mightier neighbours. However, it is essential to distinguish the period of about forty years after 1261 from more disastrous happenings in the first half of the fourteenth century. The reign of Michael VIII after the reconquest of Constantinople (1261–82) and the first two decades of the rule of his son, Andronikos II, though a period of repeated emergencies, left much of Byzantine territory relatively free from serious ravaging by warfare. It seems to have been a time of rising population and of modest increases in prosperity in parts of the Byzantine countryside. The first flowering of Byzantine scholarly Renaissance may have been furthered by this. Scholarly activity of its small learned elite gained sufficient momentum to continue into the much more troubled period of the later years of the reign of Andronikos II (down to 1328).⁸ Ideally, the study of philological achievements must be a study of individual scholars, though the deficiencies of our evidence often preclude this. I shall be introducing here four leading scholars: Planudes (chapter 12), Triklinios (chapter 13), Thomas Magistros and Moschopoulos (chapter 14). But some of the copies of classical literary works, including some very good

⁶ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.8, no. XX, pp. 124–25.

⁷ D. Buckton (ed.), *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), no. 218 on pp. 201–2; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. II, pp. 530–31.

⁸ The reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II are discussed in chapters 5–6.

ones, were due to other scholars, possibly fairly numerous, whom we cannot identify.

Planudes combined much traditional teaching with original ventures of unprecedented variety. He taught the ordinary disciplines of grammar and rhetoric, using the customary textbooks and commenting on the usual small selection of poets. But he also created new editions of important literary authors and of mathematicians and geographers, as well as undertaking original linguistic studies and producing unprecedented translations of a variety of Latin authors into Greek (chapter 12). Triklinios, too, combined traditional teaching with valuable, new, literary ventures (chapter 13), though over a smaller range than Planudes. The other two were more conventional teachers, though they produced a wide variety of fresh editions of the customary leading authors (chapter 14).

Manuel Planudes (after 1283, monastic name Maximos), was recognised by Byzantines as the greatest of them all (c. 1255–1305). Byzantine historians like George Pachymeres, and his fellow-scholars and pupils, all spoke of Planudes with immense admiration and respect. Thus, George Lakapenos, his former pupil, remembered him as “the best scholar with an admirable intelligence and moral probity”.⁹ As Dr. N. G. Wilson justly recognized, “the width of his interests is much greater than that of most Byzantine scholars”.¹⁰ The texts edited or collected by him included mathematical, astronomical and geographic writings (chapter 12).

Some of his linguistic explorations of the Greek language show exciting originality, though much of his technical teaching activities, especially in rhetoric, followed Byzantine precedents in their narrow choice of customary textbooks (chapter 11). But the seriousness of his spiritual values commands respect. His selections of texts included the verse autobiography of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (Planudes’ autograph copy survives)¹¹ and excerpts from the *Meditations* of Emperor Marcus Aurelius.¹² In a manuscript of Plato written by him, with a number of collaborators, he personally copied parts of

⁹ M. Gigante (1981), ref. I.6, pp. 110, 129–30; C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, p. 87 and n. 138. Planudes is studied in chapter 12.

¹⁰ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.15, p. 230.

¹¹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, I, p. 330 (Florence, ms.Laur.32.16).

¹² *Ibid.*, I, p. 337 (Florence, ms.Laur.55.7). Cf., below chapter 12, section VII.

the *Crito* and the *Phaedo*, specially concerned with the immortality of the soul and the death of Socrates.¹³ He was the first Byzantine since late antiquity to undertake translations of important Latin writers. Some of his choices had notable spiritual and philosophical content. They included St. Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Cicero's "Dream of Scipio" with the Commentary on it by Macrobius and the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius¹⁴ (chapter 12).

Manuel Moschopoulos, paternal nephew of Nikephoros, metropolitan of Crete, was one of Planudes' best pupils (c. 1265/75–c. 1316). He was a careful student of important Greek poets and dramatists. He lacked the immense range of Planudes, but, like him, was a dedicated teacher at Constantinople. Planudes enjoyed the patronage of Andronikos II and carried out for him political and diplomatic missions to Asia Minor and to Venice.¹⁵ Moschopoulos seems to have been much less adroit politically and earned that emperor's wrath, consigning him to a miserable imprisonment in 1305 or 1306.¹⁶

Thomas Magistros and Demetrios Triklinios for long periods taught at Thessalonica, the second city of Byzantium. Thomas (monastic name Theodulos) appears to have been the most conventional of our four scholars, excelling in linguistic commentaries. He lived until, at least, 1346.

Demetrios Triklinios (c. 1280–c. 1340) may have been his pupil and spoke of him with respect.¹⁷ Triklinios was a native of Thessalonica,¹⁸ but he also collaborated with Planudes, presumably at Constantinople, and was for a period a member of his team of scholarly assistants.¹⁹ He almost rivalled Planudes in the boldness of his scholarly methods, though his over-confidence led him into textual conjectures that have caused modern scholars to regard him with a mixture of admiration and annoyance. But he had stupendous scholarly achievements to his credit (chapter 13). Wilamowitz-Moellendorf,

¹³ H. Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, I (Wien, 1961), ms.Phil.gr.21, pp. 151–52; W. F. Hicken in *Classical Quarterly*, new ser., 17 (1967), p. 98, n. 1; Turyn (1972), ref. III.27, I, p. 214.

¹⁴ M. Gigante (1981), ref. I.6, articles V and VI.

¹⁵ A. Laiou (1978), ref. I.10.

¹⁶ I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. I.12, no. IX.

¹⁷ N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. I.14, p. 389.

¹⁸ A. Wasserstein (1967), ref. I.13, pp. 172–73.

¹⁹ N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. I.14.

an outstanding classical scholar, called him the first of the modern critical editors of Greek tragedians.²⁰

Some of the editorial enterprises of Planudes and Triklinios were the collective works of teams of collaborators. The four scholars here mentioned appear to have been on friendly terms and used each other's commentaries and editions. Thus Triklinios expressly recognized in his manuscript of Aeschylus that the scholia copied in it were due to Thomas Magistros.²¹ But each of the four had different interests and methods.²²

We also know the names of some of their copyists and disciples. A few of the latter became distinguished men in their own right, like the emperor's doctor, John Zacharias (d. c. 1330), and an important teacher, George Lakapenos, both pupils of Planudes. We have a very friendly letter of Planudes to Manuel Bryennios, a notable writer on musical theory, mathematician and astronomer, from whom Planudes wished to borrow a manuscript of an Alexandrian astronomer, Diophantos. Moschopoulos was in correspondence with 'Philosopher' Joseph,²³ one of the most learned and attractive Byzantine scholars, greatly appreciated by Andronikos II.

As I have mentioned earlier, very few of the surviving manuscripts of leading Greek dramatists and poets antedate the editorial activities of our four scholars. This is particularly true of five outstanding writers of the fifth century B.C., the poet Pindar, the Athenian tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the greatest Greek comic dramatist, Aristophanes. My high figures for the *codices* edited between c. 1280 and c. 1330, or later copies of them, are only approximately correct, but they convey the right orders of magnitude.

Of some 200 known manuscripts of Pindar, over 60 are codices of an edition, the *Olympica*, by Moschopoulos and 21 stem from an edition by Thomas Magistros. We know of 20 copies of the edition of the *Olympic* poems by Triklinios.²⁴

²⁰ My free translation of his comment in 1895, cited in H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.9, II, p. 73.

²¹ In ms.Vat.gr.1824, cited in A. Turyn (1956), ref. III.23, p. 14. Triklinios also referred to Thomas' previous textual work in other manuscripts.

²² There is a valuable comparison of the contrasting methods and priorities of Triklinios, Thomas and Moschopoulos by Th. Hopfner (1912), 1.7.

²³ P. A. Leone (1991), ref. I.11, letter 33 of Planudes, pp. 66-7; N. Terzaghi in *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 10 (1902), p. 121.

²⁴ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. III.14, *passim*; H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.9, II, p. 71.

There is only one old (mid-tenth) century manuscript of some of the dramas of Aeschylus (ms. Laur.32.9, cf. above, chapter 2). There is also only a partly readable text of the same date underlying another (a palimpsest). Today we have some 150 *codices*, all, except those two, dating from the period 1280–1330, or descendants of editions produced then.²⁵ We owe almost entirely to Triklinios the texts of two out of the three tragedies of the *Oresteia* (the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*), one of the most poignant dramatic cycles in all Greek literature (chapter 13).

The history of the manuscripts of Sophocles resembles that of Aeschylus. The two oldest texts are in the same *codices* as the two oldest versions of Aeschylus. Three other manuscripts may pre-date the *codices* of our Palaeologan scholars. Sophocles is an exceptionally difficult author in both style and language:²⁶ his Palaeologan editors were faced with a very arduous task. In 1953 M. Wittek estimated that we know of some 190 Sophoclean *codices*. Moschopoulos, who annotated only the school selection of three plays (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*) is credited with some 70 of these,²⁷ though, because of doubts as to what exactly are the certain features of his work on Sophocles, the real number may be somewhat smaller. Triklinios edited all the seven extant plays and, until the eighteenth century, most readers of the printed Sophocles used his version.²⁸ Some manuscripts contain marginal *scholia* derived from a commentary by Planudes.²⁹

For Euripides we have four *codices* earlier than c. 1200 (Jerusalem palimpsest, ms.Par.gr.2713, ms. Marcianus, gr.471, ms.Laur.31.10 which is the latest, but certainly antedates 1261). Alexander Turyn knew of 268 *codices* earlier than the first printed Venetian edition of 1503: 264 of these were copied after 1261. Moschopoulos edited the three selected school plays (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae*) and Turyn estimated that he knew 114 mss. of this edition, though B. Schartau in 1981 reduced this total to about 90.³⁰ The greatest contribution to

²⁵ J. Irigoin 1966) in his review of R. D. Dawe (1964), ref. III.7, p. 136.

²⁶ Cf. H. Lloyd-Jones, "Pindar", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 68 for 1982 (1983), p. 139.

²⁷ M. Wittek (1953), ref. III.29, pp. 274–77; J. Irigoin (1994), ref. III.18, p. XLVI.

²⁸ A. Dain, *Les Manuscrits* (Paris, 1964), p. 154.

²⁹ J. Irigoin (1994), ref. III.17, pp. XLVI–VII.

³⁰ K. Matthiessen in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 10 (1969), pp. 295, 298 and B. Schartau in *Illinois Classical Studies*, VI, pt. 2 (1981), p. 222.

our knowledge of Euripides was made by Triklinios. The plays that survived into the first Byzantine Renaissance of the ninth century were divided between two collections. There was the main collection of ten plays used in teaching. A different ancient edition of plays arranged in the alphabetic orders of their titles was mostly lost, except for one sequence of nine plays. They were known to Photios and, again, to Eustathios in the late twelfth century, but there was by then, probably, only one manuscript which contained them. Triklinios may have rediscovered it and, for the first time, produced an edition which brought them into general circulation. They include some of the latest and most moving plays of Euripides. Triklinios' first edition of the rediscovered 'alphabetic' plays is in the Florentine ms.Laur.32.2 (chapter 13). Parts of it, containing other poets, had become detached and now form part of the Parisian (Bibl. Nationale) ms.gr.2722. One section of it is written by Planudes and, thus, it is possible that the original recovery of these nine plays may have been connected with him.³¹

At most five of the surviving manuscripts of the school-selection of the Aristophanic plays (the *Clouds*, the *Frogs*, the *Wealth*) antedate editorial activity of Triklinios. We have a manuscript showing his early interest in that fascinating writer (Paris, ms.Par.suppl.gr.463). His final master-version has not been traced, but we possess two close copies of it (ms. Holkham 88 of the Bodleian library at Oxford and ms.Vat.gr.1294). Some 30 other *codices* derive from this Triklinian edition.³²

The recovery of all that could be found of Plutarch (c. 46–c. 126 A.D.) was one of Planudes' most cherished projects. He assembled an edition of Plutarch's *Lives of the Illustrious Greeks and Romans* and a separate edition of 69 of Plutarch's miscellaneous rhetorical, philosophical and ethical writings, known collectively as the *Moralia* (including a few spurious ones). After his death his friends rediscovered nine more. But for Planudes, some of those treatises might have been lost.

Aubrey Diller summed up the vital part played by Planudes in the preservation of ancient literature, including several non-literary, scientific texts:

³¹ N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. I.14, pp. 391–93.

³² N. G. Wilson (1962), ref. III.25; K. Dover (1968), ref. III.10 and ref. III.11 (1988).

Not only does it often happen that a particular branch of the tradition rests on a Planudean recension characterized by peculiar text or commentary, but in several instances the Planudean tradition is the sole source for a part or even the whole of the text.³³

The appearance around 1300 in such increased numbers of the *codices* of the most distinguished ancient dramatists and poets (especially Hesiod, Pindar and Theocritus), including many carefully copied manuscripts with texts of good quality, was not merely due to the four leading scholars named by me but to others, whose names we seldom know.³⁴ They were partly reproducing the editions of Planudes, Moschopoulos, Thomas and Triklinios and, in many cases, were probably their disciples or associates. The editorial activities of our four leading scholars encouraged others and raised their general standards.

II

Classical scholars, whose chief aim is to get back as far as possible to what the ancient Greek writers may have originally written, have often regarded with mixed feelings the editors of the early Palaeologan Renaissance. Their preservation of much that might have been lost otherwise is grudgingly admitted. But, unlike earlier Byzantine copyists, who are regarded as merely trying to transliterate into minuscule, or otherwise to copy fairly faithfully, such texts as they could find, the scholars of the period 1280–1330 are distrusted as frequent emendators of their versions.

That those scholars, when access to a number of manuscripts of the same author permitted this, tried to collate them, is well-documented. Collation could mean, of course, the mixing up of several textual traditions, without the clear modern ideas about how to discern good from bad readings. But it is dangerous to underestimate the erudition of the leading Byzantine scholars and their intelligent appreciation of the linguistic usage of the writers whom they were editing. The linguistic equipment of Planudes and Triklinios was particularly remarkable. That those two scholars, at least, were much more capable of *justified* emendations than their Byzantine predecessors is true³⁵ and I shall treat the textual work of those two as deserving

³³ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, p. 341.

³⁴ K. Matthiessen in *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 10 (1969), p. 301.

³⁵ The one serious exception, which accounts for some of the distrust felt towards

of separate inquiry. In their hands "conjectural criticism of poetic texts was . . . a new departure of Palaeologan scholars".³⁶ But

where a man of the calibre of Planudes or Triklinios is known to have been associated with a particular manuscript, its individual readings cannot be assumed *a priori* to be conjectures.³⁷

There is plenty of evidence that they had access to older manuscripts, since lost, which apparently contained variant textual traditions. This is also true of Moschopoulos and Thomas Magistros. In their case, mere conjectures were probably less frequent. They were careful scholars, but emphatically not adventurous emendators.³⁸

The doubts about the quality of the editorial work carried out by the leading scholars of the years 1280–1330 reached their peak in the publications of Alexander Turyn.³⁹ Turyn's investigations produced important discoveries and accumulated a vast body of invaluable information. However, he believed that he could distinguish between the editions of dramatists made by different scholars and could define the typical characteristics of each of them. Turyn's descriptive 'labels' may not always be very reliable. Furthermore, it was his firm belief that we should ignore most of the textual variants present in the recensions produced by these scholars, unless they could be corroborated from older manuscripts, *uncontaminated* by their editorial methods. He regarded most of the *new* readings in their manuscripts as *interpolations* introduced by them.⁴⁰

This drastic oversimplification of the nature of the Palaeologan editions has met with justified resistance.⁴¹ There are several major objections. If Turyn is right, the painstaking efforts of generations of scholars to trace affiliations between manuscripts, and sort them into distinct textual families, completely break down in the case of writers edited by these Byzantine scholars. This was the extreme

the emendations by Palaeologan scholars, was Triklinios' propensity to 'improve' passages in dramatic choruses. He was applying some misinformed Alexandrian lore about poetic metres. But those emendations can be identified. See below, chapter 13, section II.

³⁶ N. G. Wilson in his review of G. Zuntz in *Gnomon*, 38 (1966), ref. III.27, pp. 338–39.

³⁷ R. Browning (1977), ref. I.1, no. XII, p. 18.

³⁸ W. S. Barrett (1965), ref. III.3, p. 69.

³⁹ A. Turyn, ref. III, nos. 20–23.

⁴⁰ See especially his uncompromising statement in ref. III.21 (1949), p. 151 and the summary of Turyn's views in G. Zuntz (1965), ref. III.27, pp. 151–52.

⁴¹ See especially Zuntz, *ibid.*, pp. 151–60 and review by N. G. Wilson in *Gnomon*, 38 (1966), pp. 335–39.

conclusion drawn by R. D. Dawe for the traditions of Aeschylus and Sophocles and he advocated the separate examination of all unusual readings in every manuscript, without much reference to other *codices*. Much of the evidence assembled by him is valuable, but his excessive reaction to Turyn's argument has likewise provoked justifiable dissent among his reviewers and successors.⁴²

One must list several detailed criticisms of Turyn's assumptions. One ground of unease is that he seriously postdated some of the manuscripts ascribed by him to the Palaeologan scholars. He was particularly preoccupied with editions that he ascribed to Moschopoulos, but what he had treated as instances of typical Moschopulean recensions of the Athenian dramatists was partly based on *codices* that were much older. The clearest case is ms.Laur.31.10 of Euripides, taken by Turyn as dating from the first quarter of the fourteenth century and as being a typical representative of a Moschopulean recension.⁴³ We now know that it was written in the scriptorium of Joannikios, active in the late twelfth or very early thirteenth century, long before the birth of Moschopoulos.⁴⁴ J. Irigoin and N. G. Wilson have cited several manuscripts of Sophocles, ascribed by Turyn to Moschopulean or Triklinian recensions, which are too early to have been created by them, though some of these *codices* may have been antecedents of their texts.⁴⁵

These cautionary tales clearly indicate that the recensions of our leading scholars must often have included many readings derived from earlier textual traditions, in older manuscripts still extant, though partly lost subsequently. Two valuable types of evidence prove that our Byzantine editors were preserving early tradition: that of their readings confirmed by ancient papyri and that of texts where they were copying old versions written in capital letters, producing peculiar errors of transcription.

Several cases can be adduced of papyri yielding readings identical with what otherwise might have been dismissed as innovations

⁴² See especially J. Irigoin (1977), ref. III.15, pp. 237, 242–43 and his earlier reviews of Dawe's books, ref. III.7 and ref. III.8.

⁴³ Cf. A. Tuilier (1968), ref. III.19, pp. 147–48.

⁴⁴ N. G. Wilson, "A mysterious Byzantine scriptorium: Joannikios and his colleagues", *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 7 (1983), p. 163.

⁴⁵ J. Irigoin's review of Turyn (1952), ref. III.22, p. 510 (1954); N. G. Wilson's review of Dawe (1973), ref. III.8, p. 172 (1976).

of Palaeologan scholars. In the Moschopulean selection of three plays of Sophocles there is a sufficient number of readings that agree with fragments of ancient papyri to suggest that he must have had access to some otherwise unknown textual traditions.⁴⁶ One peculiarity of the Moschopulean texts of three plays of Euripides was the inclusion of the ancient summaries of these tragedies. In his summary of the *Phoenissae* Moschopulos had ten readings which agreed with a papyrus.

It is evident that the Moschopulean version is far closer to that (papyrus) text than is the version found in the principal medieval manuscripts.

This proves that

Moschopoulos made use of sources independent of (and it will appear superior to) those of our earlier medieval manuscripts.⁴⁷

Of major importance is the vindication of one unusual manuscript of Thucydides (Paris, Bibl. Nat., ms.Par.gr.1734),⁴⁸ which appears to date from very early in the fourteenth century.⁴⁹ From the end of book 6 and over the final books 7–8 it provides a unique source of independent readings. Much earlier, in book 1.2.2,⁵⁰ it has one unusual word, occurring also in a papyrus dating from the middle of the third century B.C.⁵¹ Its occurrence in ms.Par.1734 confirms that manuscript's descent from a variant (and good) textual tradition.

Both Planudes and Triklinios often mentioned that they were copying or citing 'old' manuscripts. Some of those were likely to be untransliterated *codices*, written in capital-letters. Such manuscripts of "Biblical and liturgical texts are still quite numerous" and there undoubtedly existed many more during the early Palaeologan Renaissance, so that "a man of education" would be familiar with such texts and might be able to read them.⁵²

One example of a manuscript of the late thirteenth century, which had been copied from a *codex* in capital letters is a collection of Plato's dialogues in Vienna ms.suppl.phil.gr.39. Its copyist had some difficulty in reading its source and made mistakes characteristic of

⁴⁶ P. F. Easterling (1960), ref. III.12, pp. 61–3.

⁴⁷ W. S. Barrett (1965), ref. III.3, 58.

⁴⁸ B. Hemmerdinger (1955), ref. III.13 (chapter 7) and *ibid.*, E. G. Turner (1956).

⁴⁹ J. B. Alberti (ed.), *Thucydides Historiae*, I (Rome, 1972), p. cix.

⁵⁰ Alberti, *ibid.*, p. 27 and note to line 1.

⁵¹ E. G. Turner (1956), ref. III.13, pp. 96 and 98.

⁵² R. Browning (1977), ref. I.1, no. XII, p. 14.

transliteration from a capital-letters *codex* of a type current in the third and fourth centuries A.D. or from some descendant still in capital letters.⁵³

In chapter 12 on Planudes I shall be discussing his editions based on manuscripts with unusual textual traditions, probably old *codices* rediscovered by him. Here I want to adduce only two very instructive examples. His collection of ancient poetry in the Florentine manuscript Laur.32.16 includes the *Dionysiaca* by a (? fifth century A.D.) Egyptian poet Nonnos. Planudes has preserved here the only complete text of what is a mine of information about ancient mythology. Elsewhere we have only tiny fragments of Nonnos.⁵⁴

Planudes' exemplar must have been a great rarity, and may have been very old. The number of lines which he marks as his own interpolations suggest that it was damaged.⁵⁵

Planudes' difficulties suggest also that it may have been written in capital-letters and as a continuous text, without separating words.

The version of Pindar, in the Milanese ms. Ambros. C.222, inf., from the second *Olympian* ode onwards, is "of a unique character, both in text and *scholia*, preserving many good readings unknown elsewhere." The errors which it shows seem often to be due to misreading of a version in capital-letters. It clearly "goes back to a separate sub-archetype from the rest of the tradition". Jean Irigoin "plausibly suggests that it is a copy, at very few removes indeed, of a mutilated" capital manuscript "which happened to survive into late Byzantine times". Irigoin also noted the remarkable resemblance of its writing to the hands in the Planudean ms. Laur.32.16. It probably dates from about the same time (c. 1280) and may have been connected with Planudes.⁵⁶

It is R. Browning's considered conclusion, particularly with Planudes and Triklinios in mind, "that it was not an exception for a thirteenth or fourteenth century scholar to have access to early tradition, it was the rule".⁵⁷

⁵³ J. Burnet (1903), ref. III.4 and E. R. Dodds (1957), ref. III.9, pp. 24 and 26; J. Irigoin in *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 16 (1986), pp. 28–9. See also chapter 10, section II.

⁵⁴ For details see E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 326–218.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁵⁶ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. III.14, pp. 240–46.

⁵⁷ R. Browning, (1977), ref. I.1, no. XII, p. 18.

We do not know where the hitherto neglected manuscripts were found. It has been plausibly suggested that some were derived from repositories (presumably monastic) in western Asia Minor, rediscovered when the centre of Byzantine civilization was transferred there during the Nicean period, but there is no documentary evidence for this conjecture. It is probable that during the educational and scholarly revival after 1261 there was much deliberate searching for hitherto neglected *codices*. When in 1301 Planudes noted that the 69 miscellaneous treatises by Plutarch "were all that he had found",⁵⁸ this implies that he had been conducting much search for them (see below, section III).

III

There is a detailed account of the scholarly activities of Planudes in chapter 12, but it is instructive to discuss beforehand some of the distinctive features of his methods. This will make clear his immense erudition, his scholarly integrity and his passionate desire to recover better knowledge of ancient literature and to impart it to his pupils. Much the same can be said of Triklinios (chapter 13).

One of Planudes' most enterprising exploits was to emend the poem about astronomical constellations by Aratos, the *Phaenomena*.⁵⁹ This was written probably c. 276–74 B.C. Aratos was no astronomer. His poetic adaptation of an earlier, strictly astronomical treatise by Eudoxos (a friend of Plato) contained much that was later systematically criticized by Hipparchos, one of the most rigorously precise ancient astronomers.⁶⁰ Hipparchos' commentary on Aratos is the only one of his writings to survive from Antiquity and was known to Planudes. Aratos included abundant mythological lore about constellations. We have Planudes' own, partly autograph, edition of this poem.⁶¹ Using both the commentary by Hipparchos and Ptolemy's astronomical treatise, known in medieval western Europe as the *Almagest*, Planudes replaced what he regarded as astronomical errors

⁵⁸ Irigoin and Flacelière (1987), ref. III.16, p. CCLXXIII and n. 3.

⁵⁹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, II, pp. 415–17.

⁶⁰ F. F. Repellini, "Ipparco e la tradizione astronomica" in G. Giannantoni e M. Veggetti (eds.), *La Scienza Ellenistica* (Napoli, 1984), pp. 191–223.

⁶¹ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' ms.18.7.15. Cf. the library's catalogue and I.C. Cunningham (1970), ref. III.5.

of Aratos by corrections in verses of his own composition. He also copied ancient *scholia* to Aratos from a later commentary by Theon and added other ancient texts related to the study of this poem.⁶² Triklinios was very impressed by this exploit of his friend and one of the manuscripts containing these emendations contains a note, added by Triklinios, describing what had been done by Planudes and explaining that the astronomical corrections were based on Ptolemy.⁶³

An enduring concern of Planudes was the recovery of all the writings of Plutarch (c. 46–126 A.D.). He embarked on this enterprise before 1295 and his principal fair copy was completed in July 1296 (Paris, Bibl.Nat., ms.gr.1671). This included both the *Lives of the Illustrious Greeks and Romans* and a collection of miscellaneous essays which we are accustomed to call the *Moralia*. There are 69 of these in that manuscript.⁶⁴ A later copy by Planudes (in the Venetian ms. Marcianus gr.481), dating from 1301, has a note that 69 were “all that I had found”.⁶⁵

In ms.Par.gr.1671 (fo.213) there is a very observant note about one particular fault in some texts, testifying to Planudes’ wide experience of manuscripts. He points out that some passages might be unintelligible because the scribes, instead of indicating gaps in the manuscripts that they were copying, joined together the words that were still there, as if no gaps existed.⁶⁶

In the Planudean source for *Moralia* 1–21, (ms. Mosquensis gr.352 of the twelfth century) corrected by Planudes, his conjectures sometimes are expressly indicated, supplemented by explanatory notes. Variants found in manuscripts other than his main source are identified by the word *graphetai*.⁶⁷ Where Plutarch had quoted other writers, and these citations have been faultily transmitted, Planudes restored the correct texts using manuscripts of those writers. He did this with texts of Pindar and Homer.⁶⁸

The same type of improvement is found in the Greek translations

⁶² J. Martin (1956), ref. III.18 (*Histoire . . .*), pp. 249, 295–96.

⁶³ L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1989, paperback reprint), p. 272 and plate VI.

⁶⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, I, p. 332 and see chapter 12.

⁶⁵ *Supra*, section II.

⁶⁶ R. Devreesse, *Introduction à l'Étude des Manuscrits Grecs* (Paris, 1954), pp. 90–1 and n. 1 on p. 91.

⁶⁷ Irigoin and Flacelière (1987), ref. III.16, pp. CCLXXVIII–CCLXXX.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. CCLXXVII–VIII.

by Planudes of Latin authors. Thus, a citation by Cicero from Plato's *Phaedrus* was not retranslated by him, but instead he cited the original Platonic text from his own manuscript of Plato (Paris, Bibl.Nat., ms.gr.1808).⁶⁹ This excellent practice was followed by subsequent Byzantine translators of Latin texts. Thus, George Scholarios, the future patriarch of Constantinople, in translating around 1435 the commentary by St. Thomas Aquinas on Aristotle's *De Anima*, inserted citations from Aristotle's Greek text.⁷⁰

To return to Planudes. His translation of Cicero's "Dream of Scipio" is distinguished by sophisticated use of ancient Greek language. He employs words found in Sophocles and Euripides and in the historian Herodotus.⁷¹

IV

Instruction in 'rhetoric' was one of the most important parts of Byzantine higher education. It was "the art of speaking clearly, persuasively, intelligibly and, of course, correctly".⁷² By correct speech the Byzantine elite meant the use of what they believed to be the pure, ancient, Attic language. It was a dead language, which Byzantine pupils who aspired to belong to the educated elite had to be taught laboriously over many years through the memorising of selected works of ancient literature.⁷³

This insistence on Attic Greek had a long history behind it in antiquity. It grew out of something much wider. Its distant origins lay in preoccupations with what should be regarded as good Greek style. The opposite of 'Hellenism', that is the use of 'proper' Greek, was 'barbarism', the use of expressions "against the usage of those Greeks who have a good reputation". Good Greek meant in practice "a long familiarity with good authors".⁷⁴

The insistence on 'Atticism' represented a later, artificial narrowing

⁶⁹ M. Gigante (1981), ref. I.6, p. 112; A. Pavano (ed.), *M. Tullii Ciceronis Somnium Scipionis in Graecum Translatum* (Rome, 1992), pp. 17-18, 39.

⁷⁰ E. B. Fryde in *English Historical Rev.*, 109 (1994), p. 959 and n. 8.

⁷¹ M. Gigante (1981), ref. I.6, p. 111.

⁷² G. Murray, *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 100. For a fuller account of the teaching of rhetoric in Byzantine schools see chapter 9.

⁷³ N. G. Wilson, "The church and classical studies in Byzantium", *Antike und Abendland*, 16 (1970), p. 75.

⁷⁴ M. Frede, "Principles of Stoic grammar" in J. M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics* (Berkeley and London, 1978), pp. 51-5, 68.

of outlook. The beginnings of this "strange mania of Atticism",⁷⁵ as H. I. Marrou called it, can be traced under the early Roman Empire and especially in the second century of our era. Some astonishing nonsense was produced in defence of it.

All educated Greeks regarded Homer as the father of their national literature. Aristides, a famous sophist of that century, claimed that, because Homer was believed to have been a native of Smyrna, which was an Athenian colony, his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had to be regarded as being written in Attic Greek!⁷⁶

Two of our leading Palaeologan scholars, Moschopoulos and Thomas Magistros compiled dictionaries of Attic and Ionic usage. "It has been estimated that about 2500 Attic glosses . . . were included in the Byzantine *lexika*".⁷⁷ By introducing the best Athenian dramatists to a much larger circle of Byzantine readers, our Palaeologan scholars were greatly expanding the facilities for mastering this highly desirable Attic Greek.

The *scholia* to their editions show that they appreciated, at least, the splendid handling of Greek speech by the fifth-century dramatists, though the modern awareness of this side of their plays is greatly enhanced by our appreciation of the purpose and contents of these tragedies, which were much more puzzling to the Byzantines. The masterly use of Greek vocabulary appears in the earliest surviving tragedy, the *Persians* of Aeschylus, whom Gilbert Murray has called "the creator of Greek tragedy". It was performed in 472 B.C.⁷⁸

But there is very little to indicate what the *contents* of these tragedies and of most other ancient Greek poetry meant to the Palaeologan scholars. Gregory of Cyprus (patriarch of Constantinople 1283–89), was a learned man, but in his autobiography he expressed hostility to ancient Greek literature. Unusually for an educated Byzantine he had no use even for Homer's *Iliad*, nor did he care for tales about the children of Oedipus (subjects of tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles).⁷⁹

⁷⁵ H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l'Antiquité*, 6th ed. (Paris, 1948), p. 257.

⁷⁶ N. G. Wilson, "Scoliasti e commentatori", *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 33 (1983), pp. 98–9.

⁷⁷ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.8, no. XV, p. 32 and n. 115.

⁷⁸ D. J. Conacher in *Serta Turyniana* (1974), ref. II.2 and J. Duchemin, *ibid.*, p. 125 and n. 10; D. L. Page, *A New Chapter in the History of Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge, n.d.), pp. 4–5, 22–5, 28.

⁷⁹ A. Pelendrides (ed.), *The Autobiography of George of Cyprus . . .* (London, 1993), pp. 30–33.

But what of the men who produced editions of literary texts? The comedies of Aristophanes, as is shown by earlier Byzantine parodies, could strike a responsive chord, as did the satires of Lucian. The human appeal of the tragedies is worth speculating about. The facts that one can offer in favour of the existence of such a human appeal are few and modern scholars, faced by lack of evidence, have confined themselves to enumerating very good reasons for denying to Byzantines any deep understanding of these plays. The weightiest arguments are based on scholastic textbooks preserved in very numerous manuscripts. They do contain elementary explanation and information about classical persons and places, but are chiefly concerned with language, grammar and orthography. Their main aim was to ensure that the pupils learn how to use the correct Attic idiom. "The reading of ancient texts is entirely subordinated to the aims of rhetoric". In this body of scholastic lore, the most sublime Greek literature appears to have been approached only as a repository of lexical and grammatical materials.⁸⁰

However, there is a danger of being too dominated by the huge volume of this scholastic literature. Comparable study of aids to the mastering of languages in modern universities would yield similarly arid impressions. Some of the outstanding Byzantine scholars have given us glimpses of something very different. Men who could translate from Latin some of the most moving literature, as Planudes did (chapter 12), or write thoughtful, critical essays about some of the Greek writers, as Theodore Metochites did about Demosthenes and Aristides or Synesios of Cyrene (chapter 16), had derived from ancient Greek literature some of the insights about the human condition that constitute the abiding appeal of the Greek and Latin literary legacies. Metochites expressly cited Aeschylus in one of his literary essays.⁸¹

It is true that we have inherited little by way of penetrating ancient Greek literary criticism and most of what we have was virtually unknown to Palaeologan scholars. Apparently, they did not study Aristotle's *Poetics*, one of the few substantial survivors of ancient literary criticism. Copies of it were very rare in the Palaeologan period,⁸² unlike most of the other school-treatises of Aristotle. William

⁸⁰ R. Webb, "A slavish art? Language and grammar in late Byzantine education and society", *Dialogos*, 1 (1994), p. 90.

⁸¹ M. Gigante (ed.), *Teodoro Metochites. Saggio Critico su Demostene e Aristide* (Milan, 1969), p. 47.

⁸² Cf. section VIII of chapter 7.

of Moerbeke discovered one good manuscript and completed its translation in March 1278.⁸³ Unlike Moerbeke, his Byzantine contemporaries do not seem to have been seriously interested in looking for this treatise.

Aristotle's *Poetics* were the first known

attempt at discovering a rational order in the province of literary art, as was his object in all the other branches of knowledge.⁸⁴

The Byzantines could have learnt much from it.⁸⁵ As Christians they would have welcomed his comment that

the tales about Gods . . . may be as wrong as Xenophanes thinks, neither true, nor the better thing to say.

There are useful technical comments about the construction of tragedies, like the discussion of the components of the tragic chorus.

Comparisons between Sophocles and Euripides are perceptive about the greater intrinsic importance of the chorus in the former. A comment is ascribed to Sophocles "that he drew men as they ought to be and Euripides as they were". Aristotle described Euripides "as the most tragic of all the dramatists". There are no echoes of any of these observations in the commentaries of our Palaeologan scholars.

Some of the key questions we ask today about the outlook and the aims of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides would have been meaningless to Byzantines. Modern literature allots an important place to the discussion of the beliefs of these authors about the relationship of the gods to the humans that they controlled. The Byzantines, as devout Christians, would not want to think about such pagan problems. As F. Dölger had pointed out, Christian beliefs "did not encourage the portrayal of human beings as the victims of fate". "This kind of situation, often found in the Greek tragedy, was frowned on by the church".⁸⁶

The only other important Greek critical treatise still partly preserved today is *On the Sublime* by Pseudo-Longinus. We have today only a

⁸³ See *ibid.* for a discussion of his translation.

⁸⁴ R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), p. 75.

⁸⁵ I am using the text in the edition of J. Hardy (1990), ref. II.6 and the English translation by I. Bywater (1920), ref. II.1. The citations that follow are from Bywater, pp. 49, 51, 66, 87–88.

⁸⁶ F. Dölger (1967), ref. I.4, p. 249.

single Byzantine copy made in the tenth century and there is no certain evidence that it was known to the Palaeologan scholars.⁸⁷

Byzantine scholars and their readers had no experience of dramatic performances. "The few works extant in what appears to be the dramatic form" (e.g. *The Passion of Christ*) "are really dialogues intended to be read" and, as far as we know, "were never performed".⁸⁸

The techniques of ancient Athenian tragedies seem to have interested some scholars connected with Demetrios Triklinios at Thessalonica. This is suggested, at least, by one known attempt at imitation. A manuscript of Homer's *Iliad*, copied in 1309, is followed by a fragment of an imitation of ancient comedy, consisting of 37 verses. It is preceded by a list of personages appearing in it (including a chorus, as in ancient dramas) and is a poor imitation of ancient verse. The copyist of the manuscript, John Katrares, was probably also the author of this piece and is known as the copyist of several philosophical, scientific and literary manuscripts. These included a *codex* of Aeschylus and Sophocles (Venetian ms. Marc.gr.616) and we also possess a poem by him, deriding a monk, Neophytos, for his ignorance of the Athenian dramatists. That poem reveals that he lived in Thessalonica.⁸⁹

A stronger case for interest in the *contents* of the ancient Greek literature can be made about the writings of Manuel Gabalas, from 1329 the metropolitan of Ephesus. He loved Homer. In a letter of 1326 he speaks of the beauty of Homer's style, his depiction of character and narrative skill as well as the moral benefit to be derived from reading his poems. At least, here, we have clear testimony to the appreciation of the *contents* of an ancient writer. Gabalas composed a short introduction to Homer as a preface to his main Homeric composition, in which he retold the central portion of the *Odyssey* about the wanderings of Odysseus. He valued this literary enterprise very much and included it in the autograph volume of his writings, consisting otherwise of theological works (Vienna ms. Theol.gr.174).

⁸⁷ G. P. Goold, "A Greek professorial circle at Rome", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Society*, 92 (1961), pp. 168-78; G. M. A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (London, 1965), chapter XXI; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.15, pp. 139, 262; G. A. Kennedy (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, I (Cambridge, 1989), p. 306.

⁸⁸ F. Dölger (1967), ref. I.4, p. 249.

⁸⁹ Andrés, Irigoin, Hörandner (1974), ref. IV.1; G. Mercati (1937), ref. IV.6; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.15, pp. 255-56.

It was a Christianized treatment of Homer, with all mention of the pagan gods left out! Also, it was written in a language derived from the ordinary speech of the Byzantine upper classes. Clearly it was not intended for schoolboys and could be appreciated by readers who might not have had the traditional education in Attic Greek, grammar and rhetoric, but who read books and sought in them more than entertainment or religious edification. Gabalas' narrative was intended for the same sort of readership as the paraphrases, usually anonymous, of Byzantine historians like Anna Komnena, Niketas Choniates and George Pachymeres, written likewise in a 'declassified' language.⁹⁰

One heroic-romantic novel modelled on classical romances belongs to the same cultural world. Its author was, probably, Andronikos Palaiologos, first cousin of the emperor Andronikos II, and that would date it to *c.* 1310–40.⁹¹ This *Callimachos and Chrysorrhoe* owes most to the *Aethiopica* of Heliodoros, the longest and the most skilfully arranged novel surviving from Antiquity (3rd *c.* or 4th *c.* A.D.).⁹² Its Byzantine author wrote it in a combination of classicizing language and everyday speech.⁹³

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3. H. G. Beck, "Besonderheiten der Literatur in der Palaiologenzeit", no. XIX in his *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz* (London, 1972).
4. R. Browning, "A fourteenth-century prose version of the Odyssey", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993).
5. H. Hunger, "Un roman byzantin: Callimaque et Chrysorrhoe", *Travaux et Mémoires*, 3 (Paris, 1968).
6. G. Mercati, "Su Giovanni Catrari", *Opere Minori*, 4 (Città del Vaticano, *Studi e Testi*, vol. 79, 1937).

CHAPTER NINE

THE SCHOLARLY AND LITERARY AUDIENCE FOR THE EARLY PALAEOLOGAN RENAISSANCE

I

In the previous chapter (section I of chapter 8) I spoke of the intensified interest in ancient Greek literature after 1261 as “something of a miracle” and remarked that “nothing that we know can adequately account for this outburst of enthusiastic scholarship.” Two inquiries that may throw some light on this consist of asking, firstly, who constituted the expanded audience for this literature and, secondly, of exploring whether there was probably an increase in the number of teachers of higher literacy and multiplication of schools.

A summary of a normal course of superior education is a necessary introduction to what follows.¹ Until the age of about 16 a pupil would pursue a course in ‘grammar’. This would be based on reading, and memorising, a selection of ancient literature and lead to the acquisition of a reasonably good knowledge of what was regarded as normal ancient Greek usage. The language thus taught was deemed to be Attic Greek, though more advanced reading might include writings in other Greek dialects (e.g. Sicilian, Doric of the poet Theocritus). Of course, Homer was obligatorily studied and, possibly, Hesiod, the two most archaic writers.

If education was continued beyond the age of sixteen, it was sure to include one or two years devoted to the study of rhetoric according to traditional rules codified by Alexandrian writers of the second century A.D. and commentators on them in the late period of the Roman Empire (cf. chapters 2 and 11). Of course, it had to be based on the previously acquired proficiency in the study of the ancient, pagan Greek literature. The conversion to Christianity of a part of the elite of property owners and of hereditary high birth in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. led to the adaptation of this

¹ Cf. P. Lemerle, *Cinq Études sur le XI^e Siècle Byzantin* (Paris, 1977), p. 245.

ancient scheme of education to the instruction of the leisured Christian upper class. In the third quarter of the fourth century

St Basil in his *Address to Young Men* sets out with clarity, moderation and all due reservations the case for the study of classical literature.²

A more naive Christian historian, Sozomen (fifth century A.D.), put simply the need for rhetorical training based on Classical education when he wrote:

the divinely inspired Scriptures teach us marvellous and truly divine doctrines . . . But they do not teach the art of speech, with which we may answer those who combat the truth.³

Though originally intended as the art of fine speaking, rhetoric came to be applied to all literary genres: historiography and letter-writing, essays and technical literature, even legislation. This ubiquitous application of the rules of ancient rhetoric came to constitute the essence of Byzantine Hellenism.⁴ On the margin of grammar, but especially of rhetoric, pupils were introduced to some of the leading ancient historians. The copy of Thucydides which Planudes owned by 1300 (ms. Monacensis gr. 430, *cf.*, below, section VI), contains numerous marginal notes pointing to its use as a school textbook.⁵

At the age of seventeen or eighteen the traditional Byzantine higher education would normally come to an end. Exceptionally gifted pupils, who intended to adopt a scholarly career, might pursue a further course of philosophy but this was rare. More common was the intention of becoming an imperial official or of administering the properties of some upper-class notable. In that case one crowned one's education by legal studies, but those followed a general "liberal education" (*paideia*) and were not an alternative to it.

In exploring the groups that may have formed the increased audience for advanced education, and for studying the ancient literature

² R. Browning, "Tradition and originality in literary criticism and scholarship" in A. R. Littlewood (ed.), *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music* (Oxford, 1995), p. 19.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ H. Hunger, "The classical tradition in Byzantine literature: the importance of rhetoric" in M. Mullett and R. Scott (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham, 1981), p. 37; P. Magdalino, "Hellenism and nationalism in Byzantium", no. XIV in his *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Variorum Reprints, Aldershot, 1991), p. 15.

⁵ S. Kougéas in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 16 (1907).

on which it was based, I shall be interested in refugees from Asia Minor fleeing the Turkish conquests, the lay aristocracy, more of whom were beginning to be better educated, and their womenfolk. More of the great ladies of Byzantine society appear to have received superior education than was usual in earlier times. My inquiries will also examine some general features of Byzantine culture in the early Palaeologan period. This will include the complex problem of hostility to secular learning among many Byzantine ecclesiastics (especially monks) and the very varied reactions to this of Byzantine society.

II

R. Browning was probably right in suggesting that during the reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II (1259–1328) there may have been an increase in the number of teachers of higher literacy and a consequent multiplication of schools. This was happening, above all, at Constantinople, but there were also parallel developments in a few other towns. This was certainly happening at Thessalonica which, for the first time, was beginning to rival the Byzantine capital in the quality of its leading scholars. Browning suggested that these developments “probably made higher literacy more widely accessible than it had been at any other time” in Byzantine history.⁶ It is interesting to note that in two speeches before the emperor (probably Andronikos II) Thomas Magistros, a leading scholar at Thessalonica, should have urged that the emperor should encourage the setting up of schools in all the cities and that a “liberal education” should be encouraged for other people, even if they were destined to be craftsmen or pursue other lowly occupation.⁷ This was not likely to happen in practice on any scale, but that Thomas should even have urged such a development to the emperor may support Browning’s suggestion that “education and culture may have been becoming less elitist than before”.⁸

⁶ R. Browning, *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Variorum Reprints, Northampton, 1989), p. 231.

⁷ Below, section III of chapter 14. A selection from the two speeches is published by F. Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 163–73.

⁸ Browning, *loc. cit.* (1989), p. 231.

The greater efficiency of the leading classical scholars and teachers active in the early Palaeologan Renaissance and their ability to recover parts of classical legacy long neglected, or seemingly lost, sustained the assurance of the promoters of this Hellenic revival. The opposition of religious groups hostile to secular and ancient pagan culture was largely held at bay. The brilliance of what the classical scholars were achieving encouraged wider readership for the manuscripts multiplied by them.

For most people good education was only accessible if they had "wealth and leisure", to quote Thomas' words. For example, if one looks at the sample of 16 men canonized as saints in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,⁹ most of them had received superior education because they were children of prosperous people.¹⁰ St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), later the outstanding defender of Hesychast doctrines and archbishop of Thessalonica, was a son of an imperial official. After his father's early death he became the ward of Emperor Andronikos II and was given the best education available at Constantinople.¹¹ St. John, archbishop of Heraclea (c. 1250–1328), and uncle of that outstanding scholar, Nikephoros Gregoras, was a man of good family and was likewise elevated in the imperial palace.¹² The father of St. Germanos Hagiorites (c. 1252–c. 1330) was a rich property-owner at Thessalonica; St. Isidore, patriarch of Constantinople in 1347–50 came from the island of Chios and was the son of a priest who was a prosperous man.¹³ There is only one clear exception in this sample. Patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople (above, chapter 6) was a poor man, without classical education and an exceptionally ascetic prelate (c. 1230/35—after 1310). His biographer cited the Bible in remarking "that the rich man will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven".¹⁴ Another patriarch of Constantinople of humble origin, Philotheos Kokkinos (patriarch 1353–4, 1364–76) became a cook to the leading Thessalonican teacher, Thomas Magistros on condition that his master gave him a good education.¹⁵

⁹ A. E. Laiou (1980), ref. II.6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 87–8.

¹¹ J. Meyendorff (2nd ed., 1974), ref. III.4, pp. 28–31.

¹² V. Laurent, "La personnalité de Jean d'Héraclée (1250–1328), oncle et précepteur de Nicéphore Grégoras", *Hellenika*, 3 (1930), p. 300.

¹³ A. E. Laiou (1980), ref. II.6, pp. 90, 99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 104.

The small Byzantine elite of aristocrats and higher imperial officials formed a very snobbish group. It was a peculiarity of the upper Byzantine society that for many of them the snobbery was sustained by superior education of the traditional Byzantine sort. This contributed to their assurance, as did their wealth and power, that they had nothing in common with the great mass of ordinary people. Only a minority of the bishops and other leading ecclesiastics were properly aware of the need for Christian charity towards the poor (cf. above, chapter 6).

I. Ševčenko and A. P. Kazhdan list some 150 Byzantine intellectuals active under Michael VIII (1259–82) and his successors until 1453 who, in Kazhdan's words, "left their trace—some greater, some smaller—in Byzantine literature".¹⁶ Many of them belonged to the century after 1259. They formed a core of the educated group. As one would expect, they predominantly belonged to fairly prosperous families.

As important as statistics about authors is the evidence about the good education of numerous people who were not writers but who corresponded with notables whose correspondence has survived. We find many such men, and some women, among the correspondents of Maximos Planudes (cf. chapter 12), Gregory of Cyprus (cf. chapter 15) and especially Nicephoros Gregoras (cf. chapter 18) and Demetrios Kydones (cf. chapter 19).

There is fuller documentation about the educated elite of the Palaeologan period than is available for earlier ages of Byzantine history. This allows us to appreciate better the diversity of their cultural interests. I shall be suggesting that this diversity was one factor among several in widening the readership for the classics.

III

Studies of Byzantine education and culture have tended to concentrate on traditional features of Byzantine civilization, which can be traced right through its history. The prevailing image is of a profoundly conservative society. The Byzantines clung to all their main inheritances from antiquity, a Roman imperial political system, the Christian faith and Hellenic culture and education.

¹⁶ I. H. Ševčenko (1981), ref. I.9; A. Kazhdan (1993), ref. I.5.

Conscious pursuit of originality was certainly not a Byzantine ideal and this is a major reason why many modern scholars have condemned the culture and education of Byzantium as fundamentally sterile. Romilly Jenkins expressed this memorably when he wrote that Hellenistic models shackled all development of Byzantine literature and served as "a strait-jacket which kept its prisoner in a state of mental retardation".¹⁷

It should be added that imitation of the leading authors of antiquity could mainly be only imitation of language, literary styles, and forms of discourse. Anything else was improbable, as Byzantines did not understand the civilizations of antiquity. Thus, a belief that two speeches of Thomas Magistros were really orations of Aristides (2nd century A.D.) was a hasty assumption of modern scholars. It was disproved by more critical examination, which showed that Thomas understood Aristides only imperfectly and could not have imitated him convincingly.¹⁸

I shall be surveying some elements of this fossilized and imitative literary culture in describing in chapter 11 the techniques of Byzantine grammatical and rhetorical education. But there is also need to examine elements of innovation and variety which existed in the century after 1261. Indeed, their increased prominence forms one distinctive feature of the early Palaeologan Renaissance.

A glance at the uses of rhetoric provides an interesting illustration of variety in a field where a student of Byzantine literary habits would not normally seek it. Adherence to its rules in all manner of literary compositions was a hallmark of a well-educated Byzantine. Ideally it was meant to produce elegant performances appropriate to each occasion. In practice it was liable to produce speeches and writings of great length but insincere and full of empty verbiage. I. Ševčenko remarked of the correspondence of Michael Gabras (c. 1290–1350) that it would have been better if it had perished, as it is "bulky but pathologically empty of content".¹⁹ N. G. Wilson, referring to the exceptional obscurity of the style of Theodore Metochites, commented that he was "not essentially different from

¹⁷ Cited in the Preface to A. R. Littlewood (ed.), *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art and Music* (Oxford, 1995), p. V.

¹⁸ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.3a and *idem* (1989), ref. II.4a; J. N. Ljubarskij, "New trends in the study of Byzantine historiography", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), p. 132. For Thomas Magistros see section III of chapter 14.

¹⁹ I. Ševčenko (1975), ref. I.8, p. 20.

any other writer of Byzantine formal prose", but "merely more obscure than most".²⁰ However, one can find important exceptions. Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople, greatly admired by Emperor Andronikos II (above, chapter 6) was, admittedly, not an educated prelate. His letters, probably dictated to a secretary, display an indifference to rules of correct writing and read like passionate pronouncements of a man brought up solely on the Bible and Church Fathers. His predecessor, Gregory of Cyprus (1283–89), was a distinguished theologian and philosophical scholar, but, untypically, indifferent to Homer and ancient Athenian dramas. His friend, Theodora Raulaina, niece of the emperor Michael VIII, reproached him for writing to her not eloquently but in a "priestly fashion". Gregory, obviously piqued, explained that he was at least clear, but went on to reply in a manner so complex as to bewilder his modern editor.²¹ A very interesting example of clarity and simplicity is provided by the autobiographical History of the emperor John VI Kantakuzenos (ruled 1347–54). It is true that his eschewing of customary rhetoric was designed as propaganda, "to persuade the reader by the simplicity and sincerity of its tone",²² but it is, surely, significant that he thought that some of his Byzantine readers might appreciate such a style (chapter 18).

The surviving cultural heritage from the early Palaeologan period reveals a surprising variety of combinations of diverse literary and linguistic elements. Grand Logothete (from 1294), Constantine Akropolites, son of George, Michael VIII's chief minister, wrote lives of Byzantine saints, in pure Attic style more natural and correct than that of any contemporary.²³ Philotheos Kokkinos, twice patriarch of Constantinople on behalf of the Hesychasts, enemies of secular learning, wrote a panegyric of St. Gregory Palamas, the theological leader of the Hesychasts (d. 1359). Yet it is "phrased in the most Hellenic style and language". He was presumably treating Hellenism as "harmless so long as it was exploited only for the uses of rhetorical eloquence".²⁴

Theodore Hyrtakenos, a teacher active at Constantinople in the first half of the fourteenth century, in his "Encomium on the Virgin"

²⁰ N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), p. 260.

²¹ I. Ševčenko (1975), ref. I.8, pp. 21–2.

²² A. Kazhdan (1995), ref. I.6b, p. 7.

²³ I. Ševčenko (1975), ref. I.8, p. 21 and n. 18; D. M. Nicol (1986), ref. II.8.

²⁴ D. M. Nicol (1986), ref. I.7, no. X, p. 126.

has echoes of Homer, Pindar and the Alexandrian poet Callimachus, including the invocation to goddess Artemis in the Callimachean hymn to her.²⁵ John Zacharias, probably a pupil of Planudes (and a friend of Joseph the philosopher), the court doctor of Emperor Andronikos II and the most distinguished medical writer of his reign (below, chapter 17, section VI), also wrote three Platonic dialogues, *On Beauty*, *On the Best Life* and *On Astrology*.²⁶ Emperor John VI Kantakuzenos in his autobiographical *History* repeatedly echoed Thucydides.²⁷ He did so in his account of the catastrophic epidemic plague and in adapting the Athenian historian's bitter remarks about the terrible demoralization caused by civil wars to the narrative of the internal Byzantine disasters after 1341.²⁸

An intriguing problem is presented by a fantastic romance, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*. It is probable that it was written by Andronikos Palaiologos, a first cousin of Emperor Andronikos II.²⁹ I am impressed by the evidence pointing that way, including great familiarity with Byzantine court ceremonial and with the correct forms of official, imperial documents. Andronikos certainly also wrote a dialogue against the Jews and several theological and ethical works in language largely different from the romance. This novel shows clear influence of ancient Greek romances, though, apart from the prominence of the god Eros, it does not invoke Greek pagan deities. Its language is a mixture of educated vocabulary and a more common, everyday speech, but it uses 'politic' verse, based on accenting of words, in contrast to classical metres, based on the length of syllables. In one of his letters Planudes expressed his contempt for this new-fangled popular Byzantine metre.³⁰

IV

Religious writings survived best in Byzantium because they mattered to a larger Byzantine readership than any other kind of literature.

²⁵ R. Browning (1995), ref. I.1 of chapter 12, pp. 19–20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁷ H. Hunger (1976), ref. II.4a and A. Kazhdan (1980), ref. II.4b.

²⁸ Cited in an English translation by P. Charanis in *Byzantion*, 15 (1940–41), pp. 210–11.

²⁹ H. Hunger (1968), ref. II.3.; H. G. Beck (1971), ref. II.2, pp. 117–24.

³⁰ R. Beaton (1989), ref. II.1, pp. 94–5.

One of the central features of Byzantine civilization was the conflict between those Byzantines who rejected all non-Christian literature (Chapters 1, 6, 10, 18–19) and those who continued to prize highly the ancient Hellenic legacy of pagan writers. There was also a third group, devout readers who were attached to their classical education and the ancient literature on which it was based. Some of them were convinced that classical literature ‘could in fact be an aid to sanctity’ (e.g. Joseph the Philosopher, below, section VII of chapter 10). Ševčenko’s and Kazhdan’s lists of the *literati*, with their large number of religious writers, probably fail to do justice to many people who combined, as writers and readers, a predominant devotion to religious literature with pride in their classical education and their ability to savour ancient Greek, secular literature.

There is no denying that one major obstacle to the acceptance and spread of classical learning was the hostility to it of the majority of Byzantine monks and, at best, the indifference to it of much of the remaining Byzantine clergy, followed by the many pious souls who accepted their spiritual teachings: the conflict between the “love of Hellenic learning” and the “search for God”.³¹

Here I only wish to discuss the existence of many people who did try to combine those two sets of values. It is important not to oversimplify the conflicts between them. Some of the most prominent Hesychast theologians were steeped also in classical, secular learning. I have noted earlier (section II) the excellent education of St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), the foremost Hesychast theologian. Only at the age of about twenty did he end his pursuit of secular learning.³² Gregory Akindynos had been a pupil of Palamas and his letters show a continued admiration for the sincere and artless piety of the Hesychast monks, though theological differences made him from 1341 onwards the leader of the anti-Hesychast theologians. Though several monasteries on Mt. Athos refused in 1331 to accept him as a member of their communities because they were suspicious of his considerable secular learning, he never mentioned this in subsequent letters concerned with his anti-Hesychast polemics.³³

Leon Bréhier, in discussing in 1926 the career of Nikephoros

³¹ An adaptation of the title of J. Leclercq, *L'amour des lettres et le désir de Dieu* (Paris, 1957).

³² J. Meyendorff (2nd ed., 1974), ref. III.4, pp. 30–32.

³³ A. C. Hero (1983), ref. III.2, pp. X–XI.

Gregoras (cf. chapters 18–19), a famous Byzantine scholar (d. c. 1360–61), argued that Gregoras' devotion to secular learning explained why he assumed the leadership of opposition to the Hesychasts.³⁴ His aversion to monks and other ecclesiastics who denied the relevance of "outer secular wisdom" to the pursuit of Christian salvation was an important element in Gregoras' religious preferences. However, the weightiest motives for his stubborn opposition to Hesychasm appear to have been religious. In his adherence to what was the more learned, traditional Byzantine theology he was opposing what he regarded as a heresy.

Nicholas Kabasilas, a member of a distinguished family from Thessalonica (nephew of its future archbishop, Neilos Kabasilas) and one of the greatest spiritual theologians, was another splendidly educated scholar. As a young man, he wrote a commentary on Book III of Ptolemy's astronomical *Almagest*. His letters are models of easy, elegant style that might be included in any selection of the best Byzantine correspondence.³⁵ Nor did his religious priorities destroy friendships with some of the chief proponents of the opposite religious group. Demetrios Kydones, the eminent scholar and statesman, and a member of another old Thessalonican family (chapter 19), continued his friendship with Kabasilas into the 1360s,³⁶ even when their religious differences had become irreconcilable.

V

In chapter 5 I have recorded the loss of interest in the Anatolian lands by Emperor Michael VIII after the transfer of his capital to the recaptured Constantinople. The Turkish conquests followed.

The raiders came, in the beginning for booty. But as the Byzantine armies were disbanded or transferred to Europe, the raiders settled on the land.

³⁴ Cited by V. Laurent in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 11, pt. 1 (1931), Coll. 460–61.

³⁵ R. Guiland, "La correspondance inédite de Nicolas Cabasilas", *Byzantion*, 30 (1929–30), pp. 96–102. See also I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. I.9., no. X, pp. 49–59.

³⁶ Ševčenko, *ibid.* (1981), no. IV, p. 162; P. Enekipides, "Der Briefwechsel des Mystikers Nikolaos Kabasilas", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 46 (1953), pp. 41–42.

This was happening already by the late 1260s. Byzantine attempts to defend western Anatolia in the three-quarters of a century following their recovery of Constantinople were few and half-hearted. In the northern territory of Bithynia the Turkish conquests took longer, but ultimately it, too, was lost.³⁷ The first recorded appearance of Osman, the founder of the future Turkish Empire, was in 1301–2, when he defeated the Byzantines just outside the main Anatolian outpost of Constantinople at Nicomedia.³⁸ That city held out until 1337. By the time of its surrender to the Turks in that year, after a long siege, only the city of Philadelphia still remained Byzantine.³⁹

George Pachymeres is the main chronicler of these disasters. Writing of the late thirteenth century he lamented that

thus in a short time the [Turks], attacking the land of the Rhomaioi, transformed it into another desert encompassing the length and width of the land from the Black Sea to the sea by Rhodes.⁴⁰

Huge numbers of refugees crowded into Constantinople while other Greeks fled to the islands of the Aegean sea or parts of mainland Greece.⁴¹

Robert Browning, in his short account of George Karbones, noted that he was one of those refugees who became a scholar at Constantinople, as was, slightly earlier, George Galesiotes (c. 1275/80–1357), a high ranking official of the Patriarchate.⁴²

The influx into the capital of these bright young men from Asia Minor, dependent on a combination of ability and patronage for their livelihood, must have made a significant contribution to the second humanism of the early fourteenth century.

Some of them “opened schools of their own or taught in the schools of others”.⁴³

³⁷ S. Vryonis Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley-London, 1971), pp. 249–55.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 253 and C. Foss, “Nicomedia and Constantinople” in C. Mango and G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 189.

³⁹ Foss, *ibid.*, pp. 189–90.

⁴⁰ Vryonis (*op. cit.*), p. 255.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² A. Kazhdan (1993), ref. I.5, no. 14 on p. 92 of no. XV.

⁴³ R. Browning, “A Byzantine scholar of the early fourteenth century: Georgios Karbones” in his *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Variorum Reprints, Northampton, 1989), no. XI, pp. 230–31.

A major contribution to the promotion of Hellenic learning was made by scholars and teachers of Thessalonica. In the late thirteenth, and most of the fourteenth centuries, it was "the second capital of the Empire", with various members of the ruling dynasty residing there for lengthy periods.⁴⁴

Thessalonica may have had a distinguished school when Eustathios was its archbishop in the late twelfth century (above, chapter 3), but its scholarly prominence in the reign of Andronikos II seems to have been due to a new revival of higher learning. A comment by Thomas Magistros points that way.⁴⁵ He claimed that he had inaugurated this revival by his teaching. His immense vanity and his habitual denunciations of all his predecessors as ignorant dunces (section IV of chapter 14) induce caution. But he could not have made such a claim if scholarship had been flourishing at Thessalonica before the start of his teaching there. The city was in his time also a centre of novel achievements in art and architecture.⁴⁶

As the patriarch of Constantinople Philotheos put it, writing in the second half of the fourteenth century, Thessalonica was in his time "the very home of civilised men".⁴⁷ He himself had been well-educated there as a pupil of Thomas Magistros.

O. Tafrali, writing in 1913, knew of several notable scholars and teachers active at Thessalonica or originating there:⁴⁸ Thomas Magistros, Constantine Harmenopulos, the greatest Byzantine jurist of the fourteenth century (below, section V of chapter 14), Xantopulos, author of an ecclesiastical history (below, chapter 15). He also lists several distinguished ecclesiastics: St. Gregory Palamas, its archbishop (d. 1359) and Neilos Kabasilas who succeeded him, as well as the latter's nephew, Nicholas, one of the greatest religious writers of his time, and, lastly, Patriarch Philotheos. He mentioned, of course, the erudite Demetrios Kydones, for many years the chief imperial minister (section III of chapter 19, below) and his brother Prochoros, the anti-Hesychast writer, prosecuted by the Byzantine church for heresy. Tafrali also lists scholarly correspondents documented by the surviving letters of various notables.⁴⁹ He wrote too early to be aware

⁴⁴ D. M. Nicol (1986), ref. I.7, no. X, pp. 122-23.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131 and n. 1.

⁴⁸ O. Tafrali (1913), ref. I.10, pp. 150-52.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

of the achievements of the most outstanding Thessalonican classical scholar, Demetrios Triklinios (below, chapter 13), and the notable circle of collaborators gathered around him.

VI

As one would expect, many of the men who had received higher literary education were imperial officials of fairly high rank. Indeed, without such education they could not have achieved such leading positions. Of course, the same had been true in the past, as A. Kazhdan tried to confirm for the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁵⁰ In that earlier period members of the military and land-owning aristocracy did not need to be well-educated and only a few of them are known to have left any writings. Land-owning *literati* were still surprisingly few in numbers in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁵¹ However, I have the impression that more members of that group were receiving good literary education under Andronikos II and his successors in the fourteenth century, but the types of evidence available to us do not help to form a very clear picture.

A considerable number of aristocrats were connected by descent, or marriage, with the Palaeologan dynasty and would have every incentive to seek a Hellenic education that would help to attract the favour of its emperors who were convinced patrons of the higher learning. Andronikos Palaiologos, a first cousin of Emperor Andronikos II, was a versatile writer (above, section III), as was Theodore, the same emperor's son from his second marriage (below, section I of chapter 16). To this group of imperial relatives John Kantakuzenos (the future Emperor John VI) also belonged, one of the wealthiest aristocrats, a member of a family connected both by descent and marriage with the Palaiologi.⁵² John's autobiographical *History* (below, chapter 18) is written with a directness and simplicity of style uncommon among the Byzantine *literati* of his age and he acquired a

⁵⁰ A. Kazhdan (193), ref. I.5, no. XV, p. 90, n. 10.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵² D. M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 17–18.

reading knowledge of Latin.⁵³ His children were, of course, highly educated.

Andronikos Zaridas had possessed extensive estates in Asia Minor and became a pupil of Planudes. George Lakapenos, a fellow disciple of Planudes, included in the selection of his letters which he used as models of rhetorical Greek for the instruction of his pupils seventeen letters addressed to Zaridas. Lakapenos also included in this "model collection" eight letters of Zaridas to himself.⁵⁴ Here was a Byzantine notable who had become an accomplished product of the higher learning.

A small elite of women married to members of the ruling dynasty or to leading aristocrats provided an addition to the audience for Hellenic learning. These high-born ladies were probably educated by private tutors.⁵⁵ Women belonging to this upper-class group appear to have enjoyed more opportunities than in the past for receiving good education. D. M. Nicol had observed that "in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries" they "seemed to feel more free and more confident to do and say things than their ancestors". Under Michael VIII they played an extraordinarily active part in opposing his policy of Union with the Western Church, "even courting persecution for their beliefs".⁵⁶

The best known and one of the most remarkable of these scholarly ladies is Theodora Raulaina (c. 1240–1300).⁵⁷ She was a niece of Michael VIII. Her first husband, George Muzalon, regent for the young Emperor John Laskaris, was murdered in her presence at the instigation of that same uncle. He then made her marry a leading aristocratic supporter of his, John Raul.

She must have had excellent private education as a young girl because it was during that second marriage (up to 1274) that she copied in her own hand two classical manuscripts of the speeches

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

⁵⁴ R. Guiland (1927), ref. I.2, p. 387; L. Voltz, "Die Schriftstellerei des Georgios Lakapenos", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 2 (1893), p. 223. Evidence that Zaridas was a pupil of Planudes comes from letters 39 and 42 of Planudes in P. A. M. Leone (ed.), *Maximi Monachi Planudis. Epistulae* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 71, 74.

⁵⁵ D. M. Nicol (1994), ref. II.9, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

⁵⁷ My account of her is based on Nicol, *ibid.*, pp. 33–47 and on S. Kougéas, "Zur Geschichte der Münchener Thukydideshandschrift Augustanus F", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 16 (1907), pp. 588–607.

of Aristides (ms. Vat. gr. 1899) and of the commentary of Simplicius on the *Physics* of Aristotle. The most scholarly phase of her life came under Andronikos II. Widowed in 1274, she established a nunnery after 1283 and became a munificent patroness of learning and the arts. Two great scholars, Gregory of Cyprus (patriarch 1283–89) and Maximos Planudes (c. 1255–1305), were close friends, advising her about ancient writers and exchanging manuscripts with her. Her knowledge of classical Greek literature was prodigious. Her only surviving writing is the life of two martyrs and saints of the ninth century, persecuted for opposing iconoclasm. “It was a work of piety but also a vehicle for demonstrating” her Greek erudition. “She quotes not only from the Scriptures but also from Hesiod, Homer, Diogenes Laertius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Euripides and Strabo”. Besides assembling an extensive library, she also endowed an atelier of artists, illuminating religious manuscripts. We have at least fifteen exquisitely written and illuminated religious *codices* probably produced in her scriptorium and artistic workshop.

It is probable that a valuable manuscript of Thucydides (ms. Monacensis gr. 430) of the tenth or the eleventh century was once owned by her. It was later in the possession of Planudes, who noted in it the exact time of her death on 6 December 1300.

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CHAPTER TEN

BYZANTINE PHILOSOPHY IN THE CENTURY AFTER 1261

I

In his *Apology*, written after 1363, Demetrios Kydones, Byzantine statesman and scholar (1324–1398), complained that the Western Europeans (the Latins) “show great thirst for walking in those labyrinths of Aristotle and Plato, for which our people never showed interest”.¹ There was certainly nothing comparable in Byzantium to the great number of commentaries on various treatises of Aristotle, or writings using them, produced in Western Europe in the century after around 1250. Some of the best minds of Western Europe were engaged in this learning, like Robert Grosseteste and William of Ockham in England, St. Albert in Germany, St. Thomas Aquinas and Marsilio of Padua in Italy (chapter 7). Comparable Byzantine scholars were not quite of the same intellectual stature and there were fewer of them.

In a negative way, the contrast between neglect of Aristotelian treatises by Byzantines and their enthusiastic use in Latin translations in the West highlights the limitations of Byzantine scholarship. Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *Politics*, which survive in around a hundred copies each in the Latin versions, were studied very little by Byzantines (cf. chapter 7).

Some of the Byzantine statesmen and scholars who enthusiastically furthered the revival of ancient Greek learning, including pagan philosophy, were also prominent in favouring closer contacts with Western, Latin Europe, though this was not always the case. George Akropolites, who was the chief negotiator of the union of the Latin and Byzantine churches in 1274, was also a pioneer in studying Neoplatonic philosophers (section VI below). George Pachymeres, the best eye-witness historian of the years 1258–1307, while retelling as objectively as he dared the history of the attempted union of the

¹ Cited in J. Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church* (New York, 1983), p. 45.

Eastern and Western churches in 1274, and its collapse after 1282, had a profound understanding of the theological issues at stake. He had also great respect for Patriarch John Bekkos, one of the principal protagonists of the Union (above, chapter 5).² Pachymeres was both a Platonic and an Aristotelian scholar and his copies of three Neoplatonic commentaries on Plato's dialogues are the source of our texts of them (below, section VI).

William of Moerbeke's translations between 1259 and 1280 of the writings of Aristotle and of ancient commentators on them, as well as of Proclus, in their philosophical vocabulary (one of the best features of his translations) throw valuable light on what he may have learnt from Byzantine philosophical scholarship. So do his wise choices in selecting ancient commentaries on Aristotle which deserved translation and the high quality of some of the Greek manuscripts that he was using. In all these decisions he was probably following the well-informed advice of some of his Byzantine contacts (above, chapter 7).

To come now to the fourteenth century, Nicholas Siguros, who in its middle decades was a leading negotiator with the Avignon popes, copied for himself a portion of the sceptical writings of Sextus Empiricus, particularly detested by Byzantine religious zealots (below, section V). Demetrios Kydones and his brother, Prochoros, were meanwhile translating leading Latin theologians into Greek (chapter 9).

Demetrios Kydones probably did not realize that he was benefiting from the considerable increase in the number and range of ancient philosophical texts available during the sixty years preceding his birth. The blurring of the conflict between Christian philosophy, essential for the exposition of Christian truths, and the "Hellenic philosophy", that might only be studied out of literary or scholarly curiosity, forms the ideological background to this chapter.³

In the century after *c.* 1261 numerous fresh copies were made of most of the school treatises of Aristotle, though some of the works that were in special demand in Western Europe, like Aristotle's *Politics*, continued to be neglected in Byzantium. Our Greek texts of

² For Pachymeres see ref. III.1 (Arnakis, Constantinides, Failler). For his high regard for Patriarch John Bekkos see J. Gill, "Notes on the *De Michaelae et Andronico Palaeologis* of George Pachymeres", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 68 (1975), p. 296.

³ Cf. F. Dölger, "Zur Bedeutung von *Philosophos* and *Philosophia* in Byzantinischer Zeit" in his *Europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Ettal, 1953), pp. 197-99.

some of the ancient commentaries on Aristotelian writings, including some very important ones, are based mainly, or even exclusively, on *codices* copied during the early Palaeologan Renaissance. The greatest novelty was the re-appearance at this time of those ancient writers whom the Byzantine church had strongly condemned. Some were openly antipathetic to everything that mattered to Christians, like the sceptic Sextus Empiricus,⁴ or contained biographies of ancient philosophers unacceptable to Christians, like the work of Diogenes Laertius.⁵ Eunapios, a writer of the lives of the philosophers and sophists of the third and fourth centuries A.D., was a professed enemy of Christianity. The Florentine ms.Laur.86.7, of the fourteenth century is the source of our texts.⁶ The writings of Plato and the Neoplatonists, whose teachings had been vigorously discouraged by the Komnenian emperors and their ecclesiastical collaborators since the reaction against Psellos and his associates in 1082 (chapter 3), were again being copied. Plato, at least, was back in full favour at the court of Andronikos II.

As textual critics, some of the creators of these philosophical manuscripts would compare several versions of the same text. This is true, for example, of ms.par.gr.1808, combining, in some parts at least, two older manuscripts and choosing from each what seemed to be the best readings.⁷ This was the principal Platonic *codex* of Planudes and he may have been responsible for its copying, though there is no direct evidence of this.

A most impressive testimonial to the contribution of Byzantine scholars, of perhaps the early fourteenth century, to the progress of Aristotelian learning, is the Florentine ms.Laur.85.1 (nicknamed because of its immense size the 'Oceanus'). It contains in its 762 folios the largest assemblage of commentaries on Aristotle ever collected together. Some seem to have lain previously dormant for centuries and include texts from which descend all our copies. Some of the versions in it are conspicuously good. Only a patron of the highest rank could have commissioned this magnificent parchment volume and could have employed seven very different but uniformly

⁴ Florence, ms.Laur.85.19, fos. 107–348 (probably 2nd half of the thirteenth century).

⁵ Paris, Bibl.Nat., ms.Par.gr.1759.

⁶ H. Hunger (1973), ref. I.6, XX, p. 124.

⁷ R. S. Brumbaugh (1976), ref. I.1, p. 73.

expert scribes. Since the commentary of Simplicius on the Aristotelian *Physics* derives from a manuscript of Gregory of Cyprus, Patriarch of Constantinople, 1283–89 (section II, below) the ‘Oceanus’ was probably assembled during the reign of Andronikos II (1282–1328)⁸ and my surmise is that it was commissioned by him. This would be supported by A. Diller’s very plausible argument that in 1438 this *codex* was in the possession of his descendant, John VIII.⁹

II

Byzantine scholars of the century after 1261 were not always aware that they were helping to preserve texts of forgotten ancient philosophers; here I shall not discuss the ones that they ignored, though they will be mentioned elsewhere. Thus the fascinating Stoic, Poseidonios, will be mentioned in chapter 12 under the historical geographer, Strabo, who preserved numerous excerpts from him.

The survey of the philosophical manuscripts which are known to have been copied in this period is arranged in the chronological order of the ancient philosophers. The earliest group were thinkers active before the late fifth century B.C. usually called the Presocratics. We possess no single complete work of any of them

and most of the scanty and disconnected fragments that we have are preserved only because they were quoted by post-Socratic philosophers for their own . . . purposes or quoted by later commentators of those philosophers.

Because these later references to them often misrepresented their doctrines, we can “feel confident in our understanding of a Presocratic thinker only” when the views attributed to each of them are “confirmed by well-authenticated extracts from the philosophers himself”.¹⁰

Our main source of the *verbatim* quotations is a work by a Neoplatonist, Simplicius, his commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*, written

⁸ P. Moraux (1976), ref. II.12, pp. 275–6 would assign it to either the thirteenth or the fourteenth century. My tentative suggestion about date is based on the resemblance of the first of the seven hands in it to a hand that appears in the circle of Demetrios Triklinios in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

⁹ In *Scriptorium*, 8 (1954), p. 126.

¹⁰ H. Cherniss, *Selected Papers* (ed. L. Tarán, Leiden, 1977), p. 62; Kirk and Raven (1957), ref. I.7, p. 7.

¹¹ Cherniss, *ibid.*, pp. 14–15, 66–71; L. Tarán in I. Hadot (1987), ref. I.5, p. 247.

after 540 A.D.¹¹ He has preserved at least two-thirds of the known excerpts. Thus Anaximander, one of the earliest and ablest Ionian philosophers (active *c.* 560 B.C.), “who determined the limits and the direction of all subsequent Presocratic cosmological speculation”, survives directly in only a single fragment preserved by Simplicius, though we know more about him from other mentions in various sources.

Simplicius was partly citing the Presocratics at second hand. He used two principal sources. Theophrastus, Aristotle’s successor as head of the Lyceum, “undertook the history of previous philosophy” up to Plato in 16 or 18 books. Important extracts from his first book, *On Material Principles* were copied by Simplicius. His second source, from which came a part of the Theophrastean quotations, were the writings of Alexander of Aphrodisias (*c.* 200 A.D.) the most distinguished of the ancient commentators on Aristotle. A large part came from Alexander’s now lost commentary on the Aristotelian *Physics*.¹²

But in some cases Simplicius still had access to original writings of the Presocratics. In citing the long philosophical poem by Parmenides (active in the early 5th century B.C.), he explained that he was quoting at length from it “due to the scarcity” of the poem. “Though he does not say so in other cases, it was doubtless because they were scarce and in danger of disappearing” that he cited passages from important Presocratics as well as numerous later philosophers. “His citations far exceed the need to illustrate Aristotle’s texts” and are (partly) derived from authentic texts and not from any known earlier commentators.¹³

A *codex* of the late ninth century for books V–VIII (Venetian Marc.gr.226), and two of the twelfth for earlier books, contain parts of Simplicius’ commentary,¹⁴ but the earliest almost complete (and good) text was copied by Gregory of Cyprus.¹⁵ He was professor at Constantinople (*c.* 1273–83) and later became the head of the Byzantine church. His manuscript (Venetian Marc.gr.227) is particularly valu-

For the date of Simplicius’ commentary see G. Verbeke in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, XII (1975), p. 442.

¹² P. Moraux, *Alexandre d’Aphrodise, Exégète de la Noétique d’Aristote* (Liège-Paris, 1942), p. XVI, n. 1; Kirk and Raven (1957), ref. I.7, pp. 3–4.

¹³ Tarán in I. Hadot (1987), ref. I.5, p. 247, n. 2.

¹⁴ Harlfinger, *ibid.*, p. 269, (ms.Marc.gr.226 belonged in the fifteenth century to Cardinal Bessarion).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 275–78.

able for preserving good versions of Simplicius' citations of the Presocratics.¹⁶ The version selected for inclusion in the Florentine ms.Laur.85.1 (*supra*, section I), was copied from Gregory's *codex*.¹⁷ Two other manuscripts of the earlier books were copied in the second half of the thirteenth century, including one dating from the reign of Michael VIII, copied by his niece, Theodora, a friend of Gregory and of Planudes.¹⁸

Ancient Greek philosophy was dominated by the teachings of Plato (427–347 B.C.) and his greatest disciple, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.). We still have today some 1100 Greek Aristotelian *codices* written before c. 1600.¹⁹ Platonic manuscripts copied up to that date amount to less than a quarter of that number (c. 260).²⁰ If we restrict ourselves to manuscripts copied in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there exist about 150 Aristotelian *codices* dating from that period,²¹ while the Platonic ones amount to about a third of that number (mostly from c. 1260 to c. 1400). Some 15 Platonic manuscripts can be assigned with certainty to the century after 1260,²² though more could doubtless be added if we could date them precisely. Clearly, a modest revival of Platonic scholarship was under way for the first time since 1082.

The strongest piece of evidence for the rehabilitation of Plato as an acceptable philosopher are two speeches delivered in the presence of Andronikos II by Nikephoros Gregoras, an erudite assistant of the emperor's chief minister, Theodore Metochites. They date from the last decade of his reign (1318–28). The emperor was praised as an ideal incarnation of Plato's philosopher-ruler. Gregoras has been reading Plato's *Republic* and his seventh letter.²³ He also expressly referred to the emperor's love of Plato.²⁴ Erudite Byzantines recog-

¹⁶ A. H. Coxon, "The manuscript tradition of Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* I–IV", *Classical Quarterly*, new. ser., 18 (1968), pp. 70–75.

¹⁷ Harlfinger in Hadot (1987), ref. I.5, pp. 278–79.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 267–69. For her life see D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady. Ten Portraits 1250–1500* (Cambridge, 1994), chapter 3.

¹⁹ M. Sicherl in *Gnomon*, 51 (1979), p. 635.

²⁰ D. Harlfinger (1980), ref. II.7, p. 449.

²¹ L. Minio-Paluello, "Aristotle", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, I (1970), p. 268.

²² My calculations from the list in N. G. Wilson (1960), ref. I.10, pp. 386–93.

²³ J. Souilhé (ed.), *Platon, Oeuvres Complètes (Lettres)*, XIII, 1st pt. (Paris, Budé Coll., 1977 reprint), p. 30 and n. 1.

²⁴ P. A. M. Leone, "Nicephori Gregorae ad Imperatorem Andronicum II Palaeologum orationes", *Byzantion*, 41 (1971), pp. 497–519.

nized that not everything in Plato was acceptable to Christians, but the unchristian features could be clearly separated from the rest. Thus, Demetrios Kydones, in a letter of c. 1371–74 to his friend, the reigning Empress Helena, enclosing some of his translations of the works of St. Augustine, stressed that this great Church Father knew perfectly well which writings of Plato and Aristotle were compatible with Christian faith.²⁵

In his two speeches Gregoras was referring specially to Plato's political writings, the *Republic* and the most important 'Letters'. But the revived appeal of Plato to this generation of Byzantines lay also in the perfection of his Greek. Dionysios of Halicarnassos, writing under Emperor Augustus, had said that if Zeus spoke Greek, he would talk like Plato. Planudes, whose two Platonic *codices* still survive, must have known an almost identical comment of Plutarch in his *Life of Cicero*.²⁶ Plato's marvellous artistic achievement as a writer is conveyed by Gilbert Murray:

for the first time a treatise on philosophy became recognised as . . . a thing which might aim at literary charm . . . Plato's style is something quite extraordinary; ancient judges as well as modern have considered it absolutely the finest prose style known to human literature.²⁷

We have two main kinds of Platonic *codices*. A collection was formed at some date not later than the third century B.C.²⁸ But in addition to 25 dialogues generally accepted as authentic,²⁹ it included ten other items of disputed provenance, as well as letters, only some of which are authentic, though the Byzantines do not appear to have questioned the authenticity of any works ascribed to Plato. From this collection descended what appear to have been two independent transliterations. Probably they occurred in the ninth century, each consisting of two volumes.³⁰ The majority of the Platonic manuscripts

²⁵ F. Kianka, "The letters of Demetrios Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakuzene Palaiologina", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), pp. 157–58.

²⁶ Helen F. North in *Illinois Classical Studies*, VI, part 2 (1981), p. 242 and n. 2 (on p. 267); D. Magnino (ed.), *Plutarchi Vita Ciceronis* (Firenze, 1963), pp. 80, 197 (no. 24).

²⁷ In his *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 39–40.

²⁸ F. Solmsen (1981), ref. I.8.

²⁹ A. Diès, *Autour de Platon* . . . (Paris, Budé Coll., 1972 reprint), p. 249.

³⁰ H. Alline, *Histoire du Texte de Platon* (Paris, 1915); A. Diller (1983), ref. I.2, no. 23.

used during the early Palaeologan Renaissance stemmed from these two transliterations, including two *codices* available to Planudes (see below).

There were circulating in antiquity other partial collections of Plato's dialogues, perhaps intended for educated readers who were not professional scholars. They have a number of peculiarities divergent from the more scholarly collection. R. S. Brumbaugh compared them to our "paperback editions". Many of the citations in writers of the Roman Empire derived from these collections, which suggests that they were more generally available. An old *codex* with Platonic texts of this sort appears to have been rediscovered during the thirteenth century (probably in capital letters) and was belatedly transliterated then (Viennese ms.suppl.Philos.gr.39).³¹

Treatises devoted to philosophical controversies testify to the revival of widespread familiarity with Plato's dialogues. Thus, the writings on the nature of the human soul (c. 1315) by Nikephoros Chumnos, a leading statesman with scholarly interests, reveal his acquaintance with at least seven dialogues.³²

Four Platonic *codices* can be connected with two great scholars, George Pachymeres (1242–c. 1310) and Maximos Planudes (1255–1305). Ms.Par.gr.1810 and ms.Neapol.gr.339 are both autographs of Pachymeres (section VI, below). Besides some commentaries on Platonic dialogues, he copied Plato's *Crito* and *Phaedo* in the Parisian *codex* and the *Phaedo* again in the Neapolitan one.

Those two dialogues also mattered to Planudes. They formed part of his principal Platonic *codex* containing the bulk of the authentic dialogues (Paris, Bibl.Nat., ms.gr.1808). That manuscript is derived from two *codices* of the same main textual tradition (ms.Par.gr.1807 of late ninth century and Tübingen ms.Mb14 of the eleventh century). Ms.Par.gr.1808 is the source of a collection of excerpts copied for Planudes in a miscellaneous collection of texts known as his *Collectanea*. They appear there in the same order as in ms.1808 and the versions are the same.³³

His other Platonic *codex* was the Viennese ms.Philos.gr.21. Planudes

³¹ E. R. Dodds (1959), ref. I.3, pp. 41–7; R. S. Brumbaugh (1976), ref. I.1, pp. 69, 71.

³² J. Verpeaux, *Nicéphore Choumnos, Homme d'État et Humaniste Byzantin* (Paris, 1959), p. 141, n. 6 and p. 142, n. 5.

³³ E. Piccolomini, "Intorno ai Collectanea di Massimo Planude", *Revista di Filologia e d'Istruzione Classica*, 2 (1874), pp. 162–63; A. Diller (1983), ref. I.2, no. 23, p. 255.

himself wrote in it the end of the *Crito* and the beginning of the *Phaedo*.³⁴ Those two dialogues recall the conversations of Socrates with his friends during the last two days before his execution. The dominant themes are the immortality of the human soul, the need to obey the laws of one's state, whatever they may be, and, above all, the resolve of Socrates to maintain in the face of his imminent death the principles of conduct that had guided him throughout his life.³⁵ With some poetic adjustment of the facts, Plato narrates here the last moments of a friend who had been "the best and wisest man he had ever known".³⁶ That Planudes should have chosen to transcribe parts of those two dialogues lights up for us the admirable values that had mattered to him. The rest of the dialogues was copied by a number of his associates.

One interesting possibility that arises from those two *codices* and the Planudean *Collectanea* (which also includes the *Laws*,³⁷ absent from his two Platonic manuscripts), is that Planudes may have lacked a *complete* collection of authentic Platonic texts. The earliest manuscript containing the entire Plato that we have today dates from the very late fourteenth century (Florentine ms.Laur.59.1).³⁸

III

Gregory of Cyprus, patriarch of Constantinople between 1283 and 1289, reminiscing about his early career in a kind of autobiography, recalled his education when he came to Constantinople soon after 1261. He attended the school of higher education organized by George Akropolites, the most important teacher there. His courses began with the logical treatises of Aristotle. He then moved to instruction in rhetoric, apparently using the traditional Byzantine textbooks (which did not include Aristotle's *Rhetoric*) but then returned to the

³⁴ A. Turyn, *Dated Greek Manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in the Libraries of Italy* (Urbana, 1972), I, p. 214; H. Hunger (ed.), *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, pt. 1 (Vienna, 1961), pp. 151–52 (no. 21).

³⁵ M. Croiset (ed.), *Platon*, I (Paris, Budé Coll., 1985 reprint), pp. 209–13.

³⁶ W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, IV, *Plato*, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1989 reprint), p. 326.

³⁷ Piccolomini, *loc. cit.* (1874), p. 149.

³⁸ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.2, no. 23, p. 257.

Metaphysics of Aristotle, one of his longest treatises.³⁹ A generation later, Theodore Metochites, the former chief minister of Andronikos II, in a poem written near the end of his life, summed up his long career of scholarly pursuits by stressing that no one deserved more praise from mankind than Aristotle. These are two representative glimpses of the central place of Aristotle in Byzantine studies of philosophy.⁴⁰

The philosophical writings of Aristotle fall into two main groups. His early works consisted of dialogues, modelled on the Platonic ones. No complete texts of any of them seem to have survived beyond the third century A.D. A few Byzantines may have noticed references to some of them, but they do not appear to have been discussed by medieval Byzantine scholars. However, fragments, or even substantial portions of some of them, are preserved within other works. Manuscripts copied after 1261 included some of the most instructive of those fragments.

Andronikos of Rhodes, in assembling in the first century B.C. a collection of Aristotelian writings, omitted these dialogues and included only what we call the school-treatises. He was, probably, largely responsible for the subsequent neglect and loss of the dialogues. However, Aristotle had regarded the dialogues as an essential part of his writings. Sections of his school-treatises were concise summaries of these earlier discussions and only made full sense if these earlier writings were also consulted (*e.g.* book 1 of the *Metaphysics*). The dialogues, while imitating Plato's arrangement of several disputants expressing divergent views, also included lengthy 'lectures', anticipating Aristotle's future 'school-treatises'. Some of the dialogues, though perhaps not all of them, had special prefaces.⁴¹

It is often uncertain to which dialogue one should assign the particular fragments, but I am only concerned here with their sources. Fragments of only four will be mentioned here, the *Protreptikos*, the *Eudemos*, *On Ideas* (Plato's) and *On Philosophy*.

The *Protreptikos*, dating probably from *c.* 353–51 B.C., has as its main subject the value of a life devoted to philosophical study. Its

³⁹ A. Garzya, "Observations sur 'l'Autobiographie' de Grégoire de Chypre" in his *Storia e Interpretazione di Testi Bizantini* (London, 1974), no. XIII, p. 35.

⁴⁰ R. Guiland in *Études Byzantines* (Paris, 1959), p. 181.

⁴¹ A. H. Chroust (1963), ref. II.1, pp. 28–29. There is a summary of what is known about several dialogues on pp. 29–31.

contents can be recovered to a considerable extent (including its beginning and end) from a treatise of the same name by the Neoplatonist Iamblichos (d. c. 325 A.D.). Our entire textual tradition of his treatise goes back to the Florentine ms. Laur. 86.3. The part of that *codex* which cites large sections of the Aristotelian dialogue dates from the first half of the fourteenth century.⁴²

The *Eudemos*, connected with Plato's *Phaedo*, about the immortality of the soul, probably dates from the same time as the *Protreptikos* and some of its text likewise may have been cited in the treatise of the same name by Iamblichos.⁴³

Alexander of Aphrodisias, the most profound of the ancient commentators of Aristotle (active c. 200 A.D.), was probably the last ancient philosopher who had read many of Aristotle's dialogues, "if not all".⁴⁴ We owe to him important fragments of the dialogue *On the Ideas*, cited in his commentary on the first book of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* (see below). The dialogue *On Philosophy* can be partly reconstructed from the school-treatises of Aristotle, but Alexander also supplied a valuable comment on it.⁴⁵

Both these dialogues dated from around 347 B.C. The matters covered by them included Aristotle's criticisms of the central Platonic doctrine of the 'Ideas'. They may have been the first two writings in which he explicitly formulated his doubts.⁴⁶ To the same period of his activity belonged book one (A) of his *Metaphysics*.⁴⁷ Aristotle's discussion there presupposes acquaintance with the dialogue *On the Ideas* and there are parts of *Metaphysics A* which cannot be readily followed otherwise. Alexander is the only known ancient commentator who had grasped this and he supplied the necessary clarifications.⁴⁸

⁴² I. Düring (1961), ref. II.2, pp. 37–8; Düring (1976), ref. II.3, pp. 454–89; P. Moraux (1976), ref. II.12, pp. 282–85.

⁴³ O. Gigon (1960), ref. II.5. See also E. Berti, *La Filosofia del Primo Aristotele* (Florence, 1962), chapter 5.

⁴⁴ Gigon, *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁴⁵ On that dialogue see P. Wilpert (1940), ref. II.18, pp. 369–71, 395–96 and in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), pp. 156–57 (a suggested summary of its sources); Berti, *op. cit.* (1962); M. Untersteiner (1971), ref. II.15, especially pp. 612–13 (list of identifiable excerpts); H. D. Saffrey (1971), ref. II.14, pp. 14–15.

⁴⁶ C. J. de Vogel, "The legend of the Platonizing Aristotle" in Düring and Owen (1960), ref. II.5 (cited under Gigon), p. 254.

⁴⁷ On book I of the *Metaphysics* and its connection with some of the dialogues see I. Düring (1976), ref. II.3, pp. 301–12.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 283–84.

He provided an extensive paraphrase of that dialogue, which has allowed modern scholars to reconstruct much of its arguments.⁴⁹

Only Alexander's commentary on books 1–4 (A–D) of the *Metaphysics* survives now (the authorship of a commentary on later books is by someone else, and of uncertain date). D. Harlfinger regards the version of Alexander's commentary in ms.85.1 as probably forming the origin of all our copies of it, and he has based on it a reconstructed edition of *On Ideas*.⁵⁰

The vigorous revival of Aristotelian scholarship during the century after 1261 has left us valuable texts of Aristotelian school-treatises. The ones on logic are particularly numerous, as was to be expected. The only treatises that continued to be neglected (either completely, or almost so) were the *Poetics* (chapter 9, section V), the *Rhetoric* (section IV below), the *Eudemian Ethics* (only rescued in the fifteenth century)⁵¹ and lastly the *Politics*, a text which aroused widespread interest in the Latin versions of it which reached western Europe (chapter 7).

In Byzantine there was a lively revival of interest in commentaries on Aristotle, both ancient and earlier Byzantine ones.⁵² The ones surviving from antiquity (2nd to 6th centuries A.D.) are particularly valuable as they contain citations from Aristotle's writings in manuscripts older by several centuries than any of the *codices* of Aristotle available to us.⁵³

To return to the collection of Aristotelian commentaries in ms.Laur.85.1. I have already indicated the value of its text of Alexander's commentary on books 1–4 of the *Metaphysics* for the recovery of parts of Aristotle's lost dialogues.⁵⁴ But its importance goes far beyond that. Alexander was profoundly respectful of Aristotle's writings and avoided comments that he regarded as alien to his authentic teachings. He tried to clarify Aristotle's thought in it, but

⁴⁹ For a reconstruction of *On Ideas* see *ibid.*, pp. 284–93.

⁵⁰ W. Leszl and D. Harlfinger (1975), ref. II.8. On ms.Laur.85.1, *ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

⁵¹ D. Harlfinger, "Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der Eudemischen Ethik", in P. Moraux and D. Harlfinger (eds.), *Untersuchungen zur Eudemischen Ethik*... (Berlin, 1971).

⁵² The most recent, excellent surveys of the commentaries are in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed. The Ancient Commentators and their Influence* (London, 1990).

⁵³ P. Moraux, "Notes sur la tradition indirecte du *De Caelo* d'Aristote", *Hermes*, 82 (1954), pp. 146–48.

⁵⁴ Their fragments are published by P. Wilpert (1940), ref. II.18, pp. 387–96.

never dogmatically. He mentioned difficulties, made suggestions, but avoided imposing any solutions.⁵⁵

Many of the other texts in ms.Laur.85.1 require further study, as the German collection of published commentaries, the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* (1882–1907),⁵⁶ is very uneven in quality, often capricious in its choice of sources, and very misleading about the dates of many of the *codices* cited.⁵⁷

The earliest commentaries in ms.Laur.85.1 date from a generation or two before Alexander's time. These are the remarkable commentaries by Aspasios on books 1–4 and 7–8 of the Aristotelian *Ethics*. The 'Oceanus' contains the fullest and best versions of them.⁵⁸

Apparently there exist two authentic treatises of Aristotle on the *Ethics*.⁵⁹ The *Eudemean Ethics* appear to have been the earlier collection. Aspasios seems to have been the first scholar to use and comment upon the second collection, the *Nicomachean Ethics* (absent from the Aristotelian edition of Andronikos in the 1st century B.C.).⁶⁰ Thereafter the *Nicomachean Ethics* became the ethical treatise most often used (books 4–6 of the *Eudemean Ethics* are identical with books 5–7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*). Throughout the Byzantine period down to the fifteenth century only the *Nicomachean Ethics* were commonly copied and cited.

The largest collection of commentaries in ms.Laur.85.1 concerns logical texts.⁶¹ Alexander probably wrote commentaries on most of them. The first part of his monumental commentary on the *Topics* (the longest of the Aristotelian logical treatises) is in that *codex*, providing one of its better versions (commentary on books 1–4, on fos. 269–302). The other four manuscripts on which the edition by M. Wallies (1891) is chiefly based also seem to belong to the period studied here.⁶² Much of Alexander's commentary consists of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 369–71.

⁵⁶ Listed in a review by K. Praechter in his *Kleine Schriften* (Hildesheim and New, York, 1973), pp. 282–83.

⁵⁷ Cf. the harsh but justifiable criticisms of G. Mercati (1937), ref. II.9.

⁵⁸ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.4, Vol. I, pp. 284–85.

⁵⁹ A. Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics. A Study of the Relationship between the 'Eudemean' and 'Nicomachean' Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford, 1978); P. Moraux, ref. II.11, vol. II (1984), pp. 249–70.

⁶⁰ Kenny, *ibid.* (1978), p. 18.

⁶¹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.4, vols. I, pp. 245–46, and II, pp. 805–6.

⁶² J. Brunschwig (ed.), *Aristote. Topiques*, I (Paris, Budé Coll, 1967), p. CXV, n. 1.

a meticulous paraphrase, often of remarkable subtlety. He had at his disposal several versions of the *Topics* and took note of divergences between them.⁶³

Ms.Laur.85.1 contains a good text of the invaluable commentary of Simplicius on Aristotle's *Physics*, copied from a *codex* of Gregory of Cyprus (section II, above). Simplicius, writing over three hundred years after Alexander, was less well-equipped to understand Aristotle's authentic outlook, as he was hampered by adherence to the dogmas of his Neoplatonic school. But he did write very careful and systematic commentaries.

The two connected commentaries on Aristotle's 'physical' treatises owe the preservation of their best texts to the early Palaeologan Renaissance (*De Caelo* and the *Physics*).⁶⁴ They were written after 532, the *Physics* being the later of the two.

Simplician commentary on the *Physics* is by far the best extant treatment of that treatise. In section II I have recalled his preservation of a large proportion of the known citations from the Presocratic philosophers. He cited also an invaluable collection of excerpts from many later writers of antiquity and from lost Aristotelian commentaries, including the one by Alexander. "Its intrinsic high quality makes it the best commentary on the *Physics* even today".⁶⁵

John Philoponos (c. 490–c. 570) was a contemporary of Simplicius. While Simplicius was a pagan Neoplatonist active at Athens until 529 and, from 532 onwards, probably at Haran in Syria, Philoponos was a Christian who taught at Alexandria in Egypt. They engaged in bitter controversies. Philoponos was a less systematic commentator than Simplicius, but he had a very penetrating and original mind. Out of the eight surviving commentaries that can be attributed to him three were on Aristotle's logical treatises. Two of his textually most valuable versions of these were included in ms.Laur.85.1 (on the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*), the most difficult and mature of the logical treatises.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. CXV–CXXII. See also his article, "Observations sur les manuscrits parisiens des Topiques" in G.E.L. Owen (ed.), *Aristotle on Dialectic: the Topics* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 3–21.

⁶⁴ For *De Caelo* see P. Moraux, "Notes sur la tradition indirecte du *De Caelo d'Aristote*", *Hermes*, 82 (1954), p. 151, n. 1.

⁶⁵ L. Tarán in Hadot (1987), ref. I.5, pp. 246–48. However his adherence to the tenets of his Neoplatonic school made him, at times, unfair to his predecessors. Cf. M. Rashed, "A 'new' text of Alexander's on the Soul's Motion", in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle and After* (London, 1997), pp. 181–95.

⁶⁶ E. B. Fryde (1996), 1.4, I, pp. 217, 262; I. Hadot (1987), ref. I.5 (I. Hadot,

IV

The students of Aristotle active in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in western Europe were at one grave disadvantage in comparison with their Byzantine contemporaries. Most of them used only Latin translations and they usually knew little or no Greek. But the best of them (St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, Marsiglio of Padua) wrote impressively thoughtful and original commentaries on Aristotelian texts, rethinking basic philosophical and religious problems. They highly prized treatises ignored by Byzantines, like the *Politics*, or not used much in Byzantium like the *Nichomachean Ethics*.⁶⁷

Their Byzantine contemporaries worked within quite a different tradition, aiming merely at the preservation of Aristotelian texts, or, at most, presenting them in a clearer and more readily intelligible manner. Modern scholars often deal with them harshly, pointing out their lack of philosophical, original speculation; but such comments ignore their traditional priorities, so different from the western Aristotelians, who were trying enthusiastically to interpret what was for them a novel mass of learning.⁶⁸

There is, therefore, no need to criticize the Byzantines for tending merely to follow the earlier Greek commentators, ancient and Byzantine. They did not aim to formulate new philosophical approaches. Unlike the Westerners, they did not need, therefore, to devise any new terminology, except when belatedly they started translating into the Greek language Western commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas.⁶⁹

The modest tasks pursued by Byzantine Aristotelian scholars meant that some of their writings could be the works of mediocre men. Such a one was Leo Magentinos, bishop of Mytilene on Lesbos, active probably in the first half of the fourteenth century. He wrote commentaries on Aristotelian logical treatises, the ones most in demand. Four of these were included in ms.Laur.85.1. He was a

"La vie et l'oeuvre de Simplicius . . ." pp. 3–39); S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1962), pp. 154–56; R. Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science* (London, 1987), with a complete list of his writings on pp. 230–35; R. Sorabji, *op. cit.* (1990, *Aristotle Transformed . . .*), chapter 11, by Ch. Verrycken.

⁶⁷ Above, chapter 7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. III.2, vol. I, p. V and, with J. Pinborg (1982), ref. III.3, pp. 264–65, 270–72.

mediocre philosopher, but a typically Byzantine one, mainly just piling up excerpts from his predecessors.⁷⁰ A few of his contemporaries, like George Pachymeres, Joseph the Philosopher and Theodore Metochites were much more eminent men, but their Aristotelian studies followed a not dissimilar pattern. However, because they were using original Greek texts, occasionally they preserved for us rare parts of ancient Aristotelian literature or of ancient commentaries on it.

Aristotelian scholars writing in the reign of Andronikos II were particularly beholden to the commentaries by Michael of Ephesus, the outstanding commentator in the service of Anna Komnena, written probably between 1118 and 1138 (section VI of chapter 3). Like other Byzantine commentators, he largely followed earlier writers, but he was a very well-informed and objective student of Aristotle.⁷¹

Sophonias, under Andronikos II, used Michael's writings abundantly in his paraphrases of the series of treatises known collectively as the *Parva Naturalia* and of the logical *Sophistici Elenchi* ("Refutations of the Sophists").⁷² Michael was the principal source for parts of the *Encyclopedia* of Joseph the Philosopher (c. 1323).⁷³ The paraphrases of Aristotelian treatises by Theodore Metochites, the chief minister of Andronikos II, are little more than summaries of Michael's commentaries.⁷⁴ Most of Michael's surviving commentaries are to be found in the comprehensive collection of Aristotelian materials in ms.Laur.85.1.⁷⁵ His commentaries are also to be found in several other *codices* copied at that time.⁷⁶

Paraphrases of Aristotelian treatises, instead of commentaries on them, were an innovation of Themistios (317–c. 388 A.D.), during his early years as a professor of philosophy at Constantinople (c. 348–55).⁷⁷ At least, he claimed to be the inventor of this practice.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* (1982), p. 264. For his probable dates cf. D. Harlfinger (1980), ref. II.7, p. 450.

⁷¹ Ebbesen (1981), ref. III.2, vol. I, p. 284.

⁷² P. Wendland (ed.), *Com. A. G.*, V, pt. VI (Berlin, 1903, the *Parva Naturalia*), pp. V–X; S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. III.3, vol. 1, p. 335.

⁷³ R. Criscuolo (1974), ref. V.1, pp. 256–57.

⁷⁴ H. J. Drossaart Lulofs (ed.), *Aristotelis de Insomniis et de Divinatione per Somnum* (Leiden, 1947), p. LXXVII. The only text of the paraphrase of the *Physics* is in ms.Laur.85.4.

⁷⁵ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. II, index under ms.Laur.85.1.

⁷⁶ Cf. G. Mercati (1937), ref. II.9.

⁷⁷ There is an excellent account in G. Dagron "L'Empire romain d'Orient au IV^e siècle et les traditions politiques de l'hellénisme. Le témoignage de Thémistios", *Travaux et Mémoires* 3 (Paris, 1968), pp. 3–8.

In the preface to his paraphrase of Aristotle's *De Anima* ("On the Soul") he defined his aim as an attempt "to clarify Aristotle and, if necessary, to expand him", on difficult or controversial points that called for discussions that went considerably beyond a mere paraphrase.⁷⁸ Themistios appears to have used his paraphrases as texts that should be expanded in his oral teaching.

The Aristotelian scholar Sophonias was probably identical with a monk of that name sent in 1295 by Andronikos II on a diplomatic mission. The earliest known manuscript of one of his paraphrases dates from 1309–10.⁷⁹ In the preface to his paraphrase of the *De Anima* he expressly stated that he was imitating Themistios.⁸⁰ His paraphrases are careful and provide clearer and simpler statements of Aristotle's arguments. He gave the standard interpretations without adopting any personal standpoint.

The most valuable contribution of Sophonias to our collections of Aristotelian texts was his preservation in his paraphrase of the *De Anima* of substantial portions of book 3 (chapters 4–9) of Philoponos' commentary on that treatise (portions now lost in Greek, except as cited by Sophonias). This usefully supplements and clarifies William of Moerbeke's literal Latin translation of the same text.⁸¹

George Pachymeres and Joseph the Philosopher were more distinguished men. I want to look here at Pachymeres as an Aristotelian scholar, while his more original contribution to the revival of Neoplatonic doctrines will be discussed in section VI. This chapter will end with the encyclopaedia of Byzantine learning compiled by Joseph (section VII).

Pachymeres (1242–c. 1310) was an influential official of the patriarchs of Constantinople and of the imperial government, as well as the most important historian of his age.⁸² He was also at one time (c. 1275) professor at one of the schools controlled by the patriarch. The philosophical and scientific writings grew, apparently, out of his teaching.⁸³

⁷⁸ E. B. Fryde, "The 'Paraphrase' by Themistios of Aristotle's *De Anima* and St. Thomas Aquinas", *English Historical Rev.*, 109 (1994), pp. 956–57.

⁷⁹ S. Ebbesen (1981), ref. III.2, I, p. 333. He provides the best account of Sophonias' manner of paraphrasing.

⁸⁰ H. Hunger (1978), ref. III.5, I, pp. 25–6; M. Hayduck (ed.), *Com.A.G.*, XXIII, pt. 1 (Berlin, 1883), p. 1.

⁸¹ S. Van Riet (1965), ref. III.6, especially pp. 5–7.

⁸² Ref. III.1 (Arnakis, Constantinides, Failler).

⁸³ P. Tannery and E. Stephanou (eds.), *Quadrivium de Georges Pachymère...* (*Studi e Testi*, 94, Città del Vaticano, 1940, preface by V. Laurent), pp. XXVIII–IX.

He composed a summary of many of Aristotle's treatises in 12 books (known as his *Philosophia*). It includes lengthy citations on paraphrases of the contents.⁸⁴ He even covered treatises outside the habitual Byzantine interests, like the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Ideas about the proper conduct of good rulers, based on it, reappear in his historical narrative.⁸⁵ An encyclopaedia of Byzantine rhetorical and scientific knowledge, composed around 1323 by Joseph the Philosopher, largely drew for its Aristotelian materials on Pachymeres (section VII).

The treatise on *Indivisible Lines*, that Byzantines accepted mistakenly as a work of Aristotle, is the only known mathematical work composed by some follower of his. Its authorship and date are uncertain (possibly as late as 3rd century B.C.). Pachymeres in his paraphrase of it preserves about a half of its text and his citations form an important part of modern editions. He is also a witness to the text of the *Mechanica*, another treatise mistakenly attributed by Byzantines to Aristotle⁸⁶ (possibly the work of Straton, an Aristotelian scholar active in the 3rd century B.C.).⁸⁷

V

Scepticism, as documented mainly by the writings of Sextus Empiricus (?late 2nd c. A.D.), constituted one of the most coherent, ancient philosophical attitudes. Sextus is the only member of his philosophical school whose writings have largely survived and he "provides us with our fullest and most detailed account" of this philosophical tendency. It was his "custom to expound the views of rival schools before subjecting them to skeptical scrutiny". Therefore, he also preserves

an enormous amount of valuable information about the doctrines of the Hellenistic, philosophical schools which would otherwise have been lost.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ A. Failler (1984), in ref. III.1, p. XXI.

⁸⁵ G. G. Arnakis (1966-67), ref. III.1, pp. 162, 164.

⁸⁶ D. Harlfinger (1971), ref. III.4, pp. 12, 97-100, 350-60. See also M. Timpanaro Cardini (ed.), *Pseudo-Aristotele. De Lineis Insecalibus* (Milano-Varese, 1970), p. 38 and P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), I, p. 385; P. Moraux (1951), ref. II.10, p. 120 (the *Mechanica*).

⁸⁷ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.4, vol. I, p. 224.

⁸⁸ J. Allen (1990), ref. IV.1, p. 2582.

Our oldest and best version of a portion of his writings is preserved in a manuscript dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries (fos. 107–348 of Florentine ms. Laur. 85.19). It contains the first part of book 1 (against grammarians) and books 7–11 (against dogmatic philosophers) of a larger work, usually referred to as “Against the Mathematicians” (or ‘Professors’), consisting of refutations of those branches of learning.⁸⁹

Sextus also wrote an exposition, in three books, of the doctrines of Pyrrho (c. 360–c. 270 B.C.), now referred to as the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*. Pyrrho was the founder of the ancient scepticism.⁹⁰ The *Outlines* contain “the fullest statement that we possess of the Pyrrhonists’ aims and methods”.⁹¹ What may be the oldest text of these *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* exists in a München ms., the Monacensis gr. 439, (fos. 1–58v), belonging to a distinguished Byzantine diplomat, Nicholas Sigeros (?d. 1357),⁹² of whom more hereafter. Lastly, Sextus wrote five more books of “Against the Mathematicians” (now called books 2 to 6), preserved now only in texts that may be later than 1360.

The writings of Sextus, involving rational doubt about all religious beliefs, were naturally viewed with horror by leading Byzantine churchmen. St. Gregory of Nazianzus denounced them in the late fourth century as “some sort of fearful and malignant disease”.⁹³ Miraculously, they escaped total oblivion. The early Palaeologan Renaissance witnessed a revival of interest in Sextus. Officially his writings were still regarded as detestable. Theodore Metochites, the leading statesman and scholar, attacked them, and so did his assistant, Nikephoros Gregoras, who repeated word for word the denunciations of St. Gregory. This horror of Sextus’ writings was the only thing that Gregoras had in common with his greatest monastic opponent, St. Gregory Palamas.⁹⁴ However, Sextus’ works were circulating privately. Sigeros, a leading Byzantine diplomat, who gave Homer’s

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2583. Edition in H. Mutschmann, *Sexti Empirici Opera*, II, *Adversus Dogmaticos Libri Quinque: Adversus Mathematicos VII–XI* (Leipzig, 1914). Cf. P. Viti (ed.), *Pico, Poliziano e l’Umanesimo di Fine Quattrocento* (Florence, 1994), no. 84 on pp. 234–35. Last part of book 11 added in a later hand.

⁹⁰ P. O. Kristeller, *Greek Philosophers of the Hellenistic Age* (New York and Oxford, 1991), chapter 3.

⁹¹ D. Sedley in M. Schofield (and others, eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism, Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology* (Oxford, 1980), p. 17.

⁹² A. Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato tra Petrarca e Boccaccio* . . . (Venice, 1964), p. 62, n. 1.

⁹³ C. B. Schmitt (1983), ref. IV.7, p. 234.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

Iliad to Francesco Petrarca, copied the *Pyrrhonian Outlines* into a manuscript containing various learned studies.⁹⁵

There is enthusiastic praise of Sextus' writings in the *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius,⁹⁶ composed probably in the first half of the 3rd century A.D. He was, apparently, a teacher of rhetoric, and certainly not a philosopher.⁹⁷ He was neither an acute nor a critical writer. Generations of scholars concerned with the *content* of Greek philosophy have been exasperated by what he fails to give us, as expressed in J. Mejer's damning comment that it is "appalling to imagine what the history of Greek philosophy would look like if Diogenes was our primary source".⁹⁸ But he had preserved a vast amount of information that we would otherwise lack, such as our oldest known lists of the writings of Aristotle and of his early successors as heads of the Aristotelian Lyceum. Under Aristotle it enumerates 146 items, sometimes consisting of several works (e.g. constitutions of 158 cities), and dates probably from the 3rd century B.C.⁹⁹

All our texts of Diogenes descend from a single *codex* in capital letters, but the textual tradition is very confused and nobody has been able, hitherto, to produce a completely satisfactory edition. One manuscript is earlier than 1200, but it contains gaps (partly filled in a later Parisian ms.gr.1759). The earliest *codex* (Neapolitan ms.IIIB 29) also contains many errors due to misreadings of its predecessor in capital letters. There survive two *codices* copied in the late thirteenth century (Parisian ms.gr.1759 and Florentine ms.Laur.69.13) which offer better texts, but their improvements may be due, in part at least, to conjectural emendations by Byzantine scholars. We have also two other early *codices* copied in the thirteenth or very early fourteenth centuries. In ms.Par.1759 there is a list of twenty Stoic philosophers lacking in other manuscripts (though their lives are missing).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Pertusi, *op. cit.* (1964), pp. 53–62.

⁹⁶ M. Gigante (1987), ref. IV.4, II, p. 399 (no. 116).

⁹⁷ The most balanced recent introduction to him is in M. Gigante (1987), ref. IV.4, Introduction to vol. I, pp. IX–LX.

⁹⁸ J. Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and his Hellenistic Background* (*Hermes Einzelschriften*, no. 40, Wiesbaden, 1978), p. 1.

⁹⁹ P. Moraux (1951), ref. II.10. The list is on pp. 22–7. For the possible date see Moraux in *Elenchos*, 7 (1986), pp. 251–52 and in G. Cambiano (ed.), *Storiografia e Dossografia nella Filosofia Antica* (Turin, 1986), pp. 128–31.

¹⁰⁰ I. Düring in *Gnomon*, 28 (1956), p. 280 and in his *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg, 1957), pp. 25–27; M. Gigante in *Gnomon*, 45 (1973), pp. 546–50 and ref. IV.4 (1987), pp. LVI–VII; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.4, vol. I, p. 297.

The leading scholars of the early fourteenth century appear to have been familiar with Diogenes. Theodore Metochites (d. 1332) used some of the information derived from him in his poetry.¹⁰¹

VI

In earlier chapters I have discussed the transliteration, probably at the end of the ninth century, of a number of Neoplatonic writings, as part of what we call the "Philosophical collection" (chapter 2) and of the preservation of some of the rest by Michael Psellos in the eleventh century (chapter 3). Then followed a long eclipse of this literature, suspect alike to the Komnenian emperors and the Byzantine churchmen. However, during the century after 1261 a number of these treatises began again to attract interest, though some only resurfaced in the fifteenth century. They had been preserved in what may often have been single copies and their descendants are often partly damaged texts.¹⁰²

The beginnings of this 'Neoplatonic' revival may have owed much to George Akropolites (d. 1282). He had been an important teacher at Nicaea and became head of the restored imperial university at Constantinople, soon after 1261. In his 'History' he said that he had studied Plotinus, Iamblichos and Proclus. His son, Constantine, owned a copy of Plotinus.¹⁰³

Plotinus was the last of the outstanding ancient Greek philosophers (205–270 A.D.) and the Neoplatonic school of late Antiquity stems, above all, from his teaching. The earliest complete *codices* of Plotinus all date from the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries: this was the most important contribution of the early Palaeologan Renaissance to our knowledge of Neoplatonism. The texts appear to descend from a single manuscript tradition of a very confused sort. The Florentine ms.Laur.87.3 is regarded as the least bad of the early key *codices* (two more mss., Par.gr.1976 and Laur.85.15 are of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries).¹⁰⁴ Ms.Laur.87.3 contains also the

¹⁰¹ M. Gigante, *Scritti sulla Civiltà Letteraria Bizantina* (Naples, 1981), pp. 235, 242.

¹⁰² Westerink and Saffrey (1968), ref. IV.9, p. CLV.

¹⁰³ C. N. Constantinides (*op. cit.*, 1982), p. 31, n. 3, and p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ V. Cilento, "Storia del testo delle Enneadi", *Rivista di Filologia e Istruzione Classica*, 93 (1965), p. 370. For ms.Laur.87.3 see also P. Moraux (1976), ref. II.12, pp. 289–91.

"Life of Plotinus" by Porphyry (c. 301–5 A.D.) intended mainly as an introduction by him to the teachings of Plotinus.¹⁰⁵ Around 1315 Nikephoros Chumnos, one of the leading statesmen employed by Andronikos II, wrote a refutation of the doctrines of Plotinus about the human soul, based mainly on Aristotle's contrary views. Chumnos certainly had a text of Plotinus. His contemporary, and opponent, Theodore Metochites, used Plotinus, as did Theodore's disciple, Gregoras, and, later in the fourteenth century, the erudite statesman Demetrios Kydones.¹⁰⁶

Neoplatonism was seriously transformed under the influence of Iamblichos (d. c. 325 A.D.) who merged with Plotinian philosophy a body of irrational magical beliefs wholly alien to Plotinus' authentic teaching. The most 'irrational' of Iamblichus' surviving writings, the treatise on the *Egyptian Mysteries*, descending from a manuscript of Psellos (chapter 3), surfaced again in Italy only in the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁷ But his other surviving treatises all descend from the Florentine ms. Laur.86.3. That particular ms. was used by Theodore Metochites when he was writing his vast treatise on Ptolemaic astronomy in the second decade of the fourteenth century. He cited profusely two mathematical works of Iamblichus present in it. Other contents include the *Protreptikos* preserving much of Aristotle's treatise of the same name (above, section III) and a *Life of Pythagoras*, an important component of the Neoplatonic doctrinal myths.¹⁰⁸

The most systematic exponent of the Neoplatonic doctrines was Proclus (410–485). His two theoretical statements about them, the first arranged on a model of mathematical demonstrations, must be studied together with his commentaries on particular dialogues of Plato and a commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* by Proclus' contemporary, Hermias.

The writings of Proclus have survived much better than the works of several other Neoplatonists, though even here there are extensive losses, because his reputation as a foe of Christianity put his writ-

¹⁰⁵ Cilento, *ibid.*, p. 369 and J. Bidez, *Vie de Porphyre, le Philosophe Néo-platonicien* (reprinted 1980, Hildesheim-New York), pp. 120–21.

¹⁰⁶ Verpeaux, *op. cit.* (1959), pp. 54–5, 141–45; M. Sicheil in D. Harlfinger (1980), ref. II.7, p. 545.

¹⁰⁷ M. Sicheil (1955), ref. IV.8, p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ I. Ševčenko, *Études sur la Polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos* (Bruxelles, 1962), pp. 77–87, 129; P. Moraux (1976), ref. II.12, pp. 282–85; S. Gentile (and others, eds.), *Marsilio Ficino e il Ritorno di Platone* (Florence, 1984), p. 33 (no. 24).

ings in jeopardy.¹⁰⁹ His works are distinguished by the “logical clarity and firmness of his thought, the acuteness of his analyses . . . his readiness to present the views of his predecessors on controversial issues, the sustained coherence of his lengthy expositions”. Our knowledge of ancient mathematics and astronomy would be much poorer without his scientific writings.¹¹⁰

The *Elements of Theology*, a fairly early work of Proclus, “is the one genuine exposition of Neoplatonic” philosophical doctrines, as none of the writings of Plotinus, and the latter’s main disciple, Porphyry, share its systematic arrangement. Our earliest partial text of it survives in a twelfth-century refutation of it by Nicholas of Methone, but we have to wait till the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century for the survival of separate and complete versions. Two *codices* originated in that period (ms.Vat.gr.237 and Venetian ms.Marc.gr.678) and a third must have existed, from which in 1358 the Oxford ms.Bodleianus, Laud.gr.18 was copied.¹¹¹

The other, more massive exposition of Neoplatonic ‘religion’ was written by Proclus late in life and is known as his *Platonic Theology*. Two of the manuscripts preserving it completely, or in part, are the same as our versions of the *Elements of Theology*, the Vatican ms.gr.237 and the Oxford ms.Laud.gr.18, but we also have an earlier source of the latter in Parisian ms.gr.1813 of the thirteenth century.¹¹²

The commentaries of Proclus and Hermias on the various Platonic dialogues clearly originated in their teaching and partly reproduced what they had learnt from their own masters. They are highly sophisticated and presuppose an audience of high quality, though they are apt to exasperate modern scholars by their misrepresentations of Plato’s intentions in order to adjust his thought to Neoplatonic doctrines.¹¹³

The Neoplatonic scholars of the fifth century “longed for dogma, they wanted to be told what was true”.¹¹⁴ Plato’s *Timaeus* and *Parmenides* formed the core of the Neoplatonic attempts to create a coherent

¹⁰⁹ Pepin and Saffrey (1987), ref. IV.5; Westerink and Saffrey (1968), ref. IV.9, pp. LV–LX list his writings.

¹¹⁰ G. R. Morrow, ‘Proclus’, *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 11 (1975), p. 161.

¹¹¹ E. R. Dodds (1963), ref. IV.3. For the manuscripts here cited see *ibid.*, pp. XXXIII, XXXV, XXXVII.

¹¹² Westerink and Saffrey (1968), ref. IV.9, pp. XCVIII–CXIII.

¹¹³ See the bibliography to section IV of chapter 3 above, and M. J. B. Allen (1995), ref. IV.2.

¹¹⁴ G. Murray, *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 83.

system of religious thought derived from Plato's writings, as reinterpreted by Plotinus and his successors. Hence the importance of Proclus' commentaries on those two dialogues. The Neoplatonists were completely unaware that they gave them a meaning that totally departed from Plato's purpose. The commentary by Hermias on the *Phaedrus* likewise gave a strongly theological interpretation.¹¹⁵

The three Proclian commentaries that concern me here, on the *First Alcibiades*, the *Timaeus* and the *Parmenides* are all damaged, having lost their final portions.¹¹⁶ Parts of the lost Proclian commentary on the *Parmenides* can fortunately be reconstructed from his last work, the *Platonic Theology*.¹¹⁷ Only the commentary on the *Timaeus*, an immense work, is certain to have been transliterated into minuscule in the late 9th century¹¹⁸ and copies survive from the eleventh and twelfth as well as the fourteenth centuries.¹¹⁹

We owe to recent discoveries the knowledge that the three Platonic commentaries that first reappeared in the second half of the thirteenth century, that of Hermias on the *Phaedrus* and those of Proclus on the *Parmenides* and the *First Alcibiades*, were all copied personally by George Pachymeres. The first two are in the Parisian ms.gr.1810, and the last is in the Neapolitan ms.gr.339 (see below).

Pachymeres was also the author, between 1278 and 1302, of an adaptation of the commentary of St. Maximus the Confessor (7th c. A.D.) on the writings of Dionysius, referred to erroneously as 'the Areopagite' (allegedly a contemporary of St. Paul the Apostle, in fact a writer of the late fifth or early sixth century A.D.).¹²⁰ Pachymeres, of course, did not know his true date, but his commentary is an intelligent adaptation of St. Maximus and he must have been struck by the similarity of its contents to the Neoplatonic doctrines (Dionysius in fact develops parts of Proclus in a Christian guise). This might have been one of the roots of his attraction to the Neoplatonic commentators on Plato.

¹¹⁵ A. J. Festugière, "L'ordre de lecture des dialogues de Platon aux V^e-VI^e siècles", *Museum Helveticum*, 26 (1969), pp. 290-92.

¹¹⁶ Westerink and Saffrey (1968), 4.9, pp. LXIV-LXV, CLV.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. XCI, n. 1.

¹¹⁸ L. G. Westerink and J. Combes (eds.), *Damascius, Traité des Premiers Principes*, I (Paris, Budé Coll, 1986), p. LXXIV.

¹¹⁹ L. G. Westerink (ed.), *Proclus Diadochus. Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1954), p. VII; Westerink, *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, I (Amsterdam, 1970), p. 30; Westerink and Saffrey (1968), ref. IV.9, p. CLII.

¹²⁰ V. Laurent in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 11, pt. 2 (1932), coll. 1715-16.

Ms.Par.gr.1810 is a very ornate manuscript, copied very carefully by Pachymeres.¹²¹ As I have mentioned earlier, besides commentaries on Plato's dialogues, Pachymeres copied into it seven authentic Platonic dialogues: the *Phaedo* (copied by him a second time in ms. Neap.gr.339), the *Crito*, the *Euthyphro*, the *Apology of Socrates*, the *Symposium*, the *Parmenides* and the *Republic*. The last may have held special interest for the historian in Pachymeres, with his chronicle of the failings of the Byzantine rulers. The *Parmenides* was a natural companion to the Proclian commentary on it. There is also another anonymous commentary on a part of *Parmenides*, not covered by Proclus. It was suggested in 1989 that this may have been composed by Pachymeres himself.¹²²

Ms.Par.gr.1810, copied by Pachymeres, is the ancestor of all our versions of the partial commentaries of Proclus on the *Parmenides* of Plato and of Hermias on the Platonic *Phaedrus*. The Proclian commentary on the *Parmenides* was a huge work, possibly never finished by him.¹²³ We know nothing about the fortunes of this work during earlier Byzantine centuries. The commentary by Hermias on the *Phaedrus* is known to have descended from one of the *codices* of the "Philosophical Collection" of the late ninth century (above, chapter 2).¹²⁴ Both the commentaries were copied in 1358 for a John Kontostephanos.¹²⁵

The other Platonic *codex* copied by Pachymeres was the Neapolitan ms.gr.339 (III.E.17).¹²⁶ The writing is sure and distinctive, the orthography very good. It contains three Platonic dialogues, the *Phaedo*, the *Charmides* and the *Laches*, as well as Proclus' commentary on the *First Alcibiades*.¹²⁷ The attribution of this dialogue to Plato has been doubted by many modern scholars. Be that as it may, it was generally accepted as genuine in antiquity. When the young Cicero was being taught philosophy by Antiochos of Ascalon, it was regarded by that teacher

¹²¹ M. Slicherl in D. Harlfinger (1980), ref. II.7, p. 545; A. Failler, "Pachymeriana Nova", *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 49 (1991), p. 193.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 193–95.

¹²³ H. D. Saffrey (1961), ref. IV.6, pp. 320–21.

¹²⁴ Westerink and Combes, I (1986, *cit. supra*), p. LXXVI.

¹²⁵ M. Slicherl (1955), ref. IV.8, p. 400.

¹²⁶ A. P. Segonds (ed.), *Proclus. Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon*, I (Paris, Coll. Budé, 1985), p. CXV and n. 1.

¹²⁷ L. G. Westerink (ed.), *Proclus Diadochus. Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1954), p. VII.

as one of the best introductions to a course on Plato.¹²⁸ Its theme is the Socratic precept that one must know oneself. To Plotinus this exploration was the start of all understanding: "the sum of things is within us".¹²⁹ A commentary on the *First Alcibiades* was an obvious task for Proclus.¹³⁰ Pachymeres is the only Byzantine known to have used it during the early Palaeologan Renaissance.¹³¹

VII

The *Encyclopaedia* of Joseph the Philosopher (c. 1280–c. 1330),¹³² provides an instructive text for the assessment of Aristotelian Byzantine learning at the time of its compilation around 1323. Of course, it also contains branches of knowledge independent of Aristotle. Joseph had a reputation for being very familiar with Plato as well as Aristotle and there are sections (e.g. "on contemplation") which reproduce a Neoplatonic outlook.¹³³ But the philosophical doctrines are chiefly Aristotelian. Although Joseph was a saintly monk, in the section on 'virtue' the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle are cited more often than the Bible.¹³⁴

Joseph came from the island of Ithaca, no longer under Byzantine rule. Its Italian (Orsini) rulers offered him a high post in government, but Joseph preferred the life of a monk and much of his career was spent in the region of Thessalonica. The majority of Byzantine monks had no use for secular learning and many were fanatically hostile to it. It is a warning against over-simple ideas about Byzantine society that Joseph, universally admired as a model, monastic saint, and for this reason offered by Andronikos II on four occasions the dignity of the patriarch of Constantinople,¹³⁵ should have

¹²⁸ P. Boyancé, "Cicéron et le Premier Alcibiade" in *Études sur l'humanisme cicéronien* (Bruxelles, 1970).

¹²⁹ E. R. Dodds, "Tradition and personal achievement in the philosophy of Plotinus", *Journal of Roman Studies*, 60 (1950), p. 5.

¹³⁰ Boyancé, *op. cit.* (1970), pp. 270–71.

¹³¹ A. P. Segonds (ed.), *Proclus. Sur le Premier Alcibiade de Platon*, I (Paris, Coll. Budé, 1985), pp. CXI–XII and CXV, n. 1.

¹³² The main sources are listed in section V of the bibliography to this chapter. The best short account is by D. Stiernon (1974), ref. V.2.

¹³³ Stiernon, *ibid.*, coll. 1390–91.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 1390.

¹³⁵ Statement of Metochites, *ibid.*, col. 1389.

also been one of the most erudite Byzantines of his time, as well as one of the most attractive personalities in Byzantine intellectual history. Theodore Metochites, who wrote a memoir of him after his death, spoke of Joseph with sincere emotion and great admiration.

Joseph's *Summary of Various Disciplines*¹³⁶ aimed to discuss all the important kinds of knowledge. It opened with an autobiographical preface ("On his Life"), followed by a list of contents in 140 verses.¹³⁷ It describes his survey of all learning as culminating in theology, which defined the summit of all human life as consisting in contemplation of God.

Joseph's *Encyclopaedia* was intended as a synthesis of the "inner wisdom" of Christians with the "outer wisdom" of secular learning, rooted in the ancient Greek classics.

Joseph admitted that it might be thought strange that a monk . . . should devote his time to natural science. But the real object of all scholarship was the true wisdom of the knowledge of God. If by studying natural philosophy one comes to a greater awareness of the wondrous works of the Creator,

then it was time well spent.¹³⁸ However, he made it clear that on some matters the ancient philosophers were dangerously wrong. Thus, after summarizing what Aristotle had said about the soul, he remarked that "our ideas of the soul derive from the truth manifest in Christ . . . For what the Hellenes had philosophized about the soul had been shown to be vain".¹³⁹

Joseph did not aspire to any originality. He was merely selecting the best statements on each subject by his predecessors and contemporaries, citing them often exactly. His sources include eminent Byzantine theologians, like St. Maximus the Confessor, the greatest religious thinker of the seventh century and the commentator on the Pseudo-Dionysius. He was also using a shrewd selection of commentators on Aristotle, especially the separate work "On the Soul" of Alexander of Aphrodisias (c. 200 A.D.) and the remarkable Byzantine commentaries of Michael of Ephesus (second quarter of the twelfth

¹³⁶ Translation of the title in the Florentine ms. Riccardianus gr.31. Cf. G. Vitelli (1894), ref. V.5, p. 490.

¹³⁷ M. Treu (1899), ref. V.4, p. 46.

¹³⁸ D. M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 57.

¹³⁹ D. M. Nicol, "The Byzantine church and Hellenic learning in the fourteenth century" in *Studies in Church History*, 5 (1969), p. 36.

century). His greatest debt was to the authors of similar Byzantine *compēdia* of all knowledge, Blemmydes (section II of chapter 4) and Pachymeres (above, section IV).

Joseph began his *Encyclopaedia* with a chapter on rhetoric¹⁴⁰ followed by a short chapter on the widespread Byzantine practice of treasuring elaborate rhetorical letters (below, section II of chapter 11). There followed physical and biological sciences, logical treatises, mathematics divided into four branches of geometry, arithmetic, music ('harmonics') and astronomy. His devoted pupil, John Zacharias, the distinguished medical writer (below, section VI of chapter 17) supplied him with a special treatise covering hygiene and diet. Joseph was himself a medical practitioner of repute.

The sections using Aristotelian learning covered, in the first place, logical treatises. Joseph noted the omission by Blemmydes of the difficult *Posterior Analytics* and the lengthy *Topics*, while stressing that he himself was summarizing *all* the logical writings of Aristotle.¹⁴¹ The account of the four 'physical' treatises owed much to Pachymeres and the discussion of the *De Anima* ("On the Soul") was based mainly on Alexander of Aphrodisias. There was also an extensive account of the psychological works (the *Parva Naturalia*), especially the treatise *De Memoria*, using the Commentary of Michael of Ephesus, and of the biological treatises, using Michael for the treatise on the *De Motu Animalium*.¹⁴² Various earlier Byzantine works, including some otherwise very little known ones, were also cited repeatedly.

The reappearance in Byzantium of the principal philosophical movements of antiquity created a novel situation among Byzantine students of ancient philosophy. They were perplexed about how to reconcile conflicting doctrines. Metochites, though more partial to Plato and to some Neoplatonic writings, did try to accommodate admiration for Aristotle. But his ablest pupil, Gregoras, became impressed by the presence in Plato of passages more reconcilable with Christianity than some of Aristotle's arguments (section IV of chapter 18). These divisions will persist henceforth, and intensify, among Byzantine scholars.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Detailed discussion of the section on rhetoric in N. Terzaghi (1902), ref. V.3, pp. 121–27.

¹⁴¹ S. Ebbesen, *Commentators and Commentaries on Aristotle's "Sophistici Elenchi"* (Leiden, 1981), I, pp. 342–43.

¹⁴² R. Criscuolo (1974), ref. V.1, pp. 255–58.

¹⁴³ Cf. J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond . . .* (Leiden, 1976), chapter 7 ("The Plato-Aristotle controversy").

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V. *Joseph the Philosopher*

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2. D. Stiennon, "Joseph le Philosophe", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 8 (1974).
3. N. Terzaghi, "Sulla composizione dell' Enciclopedia del Filosofo Giuseppe", *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 10 (1902).
4. M. Treu, "Der Philosoph Joseph", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 8 (1899).
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CHAPTER ELEVEN

HIGHER EDUCATION AND RHETORIC

I

In chapter 9 I discussed the consequences of some of the peculiar features of Byzantine society, very different from the societies of Western Europe in the thirteenth century. In Byzantium there was a small elite of educated laymen whose standing in society was enhanced by their literary education and acquaintance with Hellenic learning. Some of the higher clergy shared this advanced secular education. The Byzantine state needed a largish bureaucracy of fairly well-educated laymen and so did the legal system. A prosperous and enterprising class of merchants was much less developed than in the cities of western Europe, which meant that a practical business education would not trespass on the Hellenic literary educational system. I also outlined the successive stages of Byzantine school education, leading to higher studies of rhetoric and Hellenic literature.

Chapters 8, 10, 12–14 are devoted to the achievements of the leading Byzantine scholars in the reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II. This involved a revival of interest in ancient Greek philosophy (chapter 10), the rediscovering of many ancient manuscripts, literary as well as philosophical and scientific, and the production of better editions of Hellenic literary texts.

Behind these distinguished activities lay a huge amount of humdrum teaching of Attic Greek language and of the techniques of rhetoric. These are the subjects of the present chapter. In separating this chapter on education from the chapters on the rediscovery and editing of classical authors there is no suggestion that these two kinds of activities were unconnected. The opposite is true and some of the new editions of poets and dramatists were actually used directly in teaching. For example, this is the case with the Moschopulean selection of texts from Homer to Theocritus (section II of chapter 14). As far as our evidence goes, all the scholars responsible for new editions of classical texts were also at the same time active teachers.

In the teaching of ancient Greek, the first stage of the literary

education, the main aim was to build up a wide and precise vocabulary essential for masterful rhetoric. The acquisition of accomplished rhetorical techniques crowned the education of the elite of well-trained Byzantines.¹

Concentration on vocabulary meant that the literary content of the texts used for the training need not be of a high quality. Traditional classical texts were used, of course, but, alongside them the Byzantine teachers used writers of mediocre quality, like, for example, Philostratos (early 3rd century A.D.) whose main merit was a rich vocabulary (below, section III).

The leading Byzantine teachers, as well as their numerous humbler colleagues, spent much of their time producing aids to all this linguistic and rhetorical instruction, devising manuals, collections of selected texts with commentaries ('schedographies') and a variety of dictionaries. A very large number of manuscripts still survive containing this educational lore, though their provenance and precise dates are often difficult to establish. This is a very technical body of materials. I shall avoid discussing this in much detail, as only specialized scholars, familiar with Greek, would be likely to appreciate such an account properly. On most of these topics I shall try merely to offer a few concrete examples. Thus, I shall illustrate the linguistic and grammatical training from the Florentine mss. Laur.55.7 and 59.44, as they contain much of the relevant materials connected with Planudes and Moschopulos (section III).

II

Byzantine teaching of rhetorical techniques virtually ignored the theoretical philosophy of this subject as set out in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. F. Solmsen described it as one of Aristotle's greatest achievements. He had a definite logical conception of the nature of the rhetorical argument and described a distinguished, highly intellectual rhetorical system. In antiquity this greatly influenced Cicero and Quintilian. But it was, apparently, regarded as of no practical use by Byzantine teachers. Hence our Greek text of the *Rhetoric* has been preserved in only a tiny group of manuscripts.²

¹ For sources on Byzantine rhetoric see sections 1 and 2 of the references to this chapter.

² Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, pp. 220, 262–63. The discussion of the Aristotelian

Aristotle elevated clarity to be the "very touchstone of a successful art of discourse".³ This was far removed from what most Byzantine practitioners of rhetoric regarded as essential. The technical manuals used by Byzantine teachers

were very much concerned with classification of types of speech, of the occasions for which each was appropriate and of the rhetorical procedures best suited to each.

The most influential was the treatise of Hermogenes (late second century A.D.), often combined with his principal ancient commentator, Aphthonios of Alexandria (c. 400 A.D.), who furnished a set of model preliminary exercises (*progymnasmata*). His commentary and a long succession of medieval Byzantine followers elaborated further definitions and distinctions, "often with excessive finickiness. The result was that many Byzantine prose writers display an almost paranoiac obsession with the rules for each particular rhetorical genre".⁴ As Moses Hadas has justly pointed out, it is symptomatic of the preoccupation of Byzantine schools with form rather than substance that Hermogenes

who is negligible as a thinker, and less than negligible as a guide to literary creativity, could have retained so dominating an influence for so long.⁵

In 1913 H. Rabe, the editor of Hermogenes, listed 132 manuscripts used for his edition.⁶

There is no doubt that immersion in this type of rhetorical instruction had an adverse effect on the capacity of many Byzantine intellectuals to write clearly and, more regrettably still, to think clearly about essentials. It all gave them an unfortunate proficiency in the art of casuistical arguments. But that was their inheritance from the educational practices of antiquity and no viable alternative was available.

As author of his scholastic manual Hermogenes did have some merits much appreciated by Byzantines. Psellos pointed out in the

Rhetoric by F. Solmsen is in *Die Entwicklung der Aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik* (Berlin, 1929), especially pp. 196–229.

³ G. L. Kustas, "Rhetoric and the Holy Spirit", in A. R. Littlewood (ed., 1995), ref. I.4, p. 33.

⁴ R. Browning, "Tradition and originality in literary criticism and scholarship", *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, pp. 126–27, citing M. Hadas, "Hellenistic literature", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17 (1963), pp. 32–33.

⁶ H. Rabe (ed. 1913), ref. II.5a, pp. xvi–xix.

eleventh century that, "he is the only author to deal with the whole of rhetoric." There is simplicity in his basic scheme of presentation. Some Byzantine commentators stressed that his treatises were easier to understand than the other manuals.⁷

One of the most magnificent rhetorical *codices*, produced probably in the late thirteenth century, is the Florentine ms.Laur.57.5. It is much larger in format than is usual among collections on grammar and rhetoric. It contains most of the writings attributed to Hermogenes (though only two are authentic). There are also copious commentaries on Hermogenes and Aphthonios. Four of these, composed between the ninth and twelfth centuries, contain unique or the best surviving versions.⁸

Planudes assembled a special rhetorical collection for the use of his pupils. It consists of eleven items.⁹ It starts with an "Introduction to Rhetoric" (an anonymous collection) containing two authentic writings of Hermogenes and two others attributed to him and the 'exercises' of Aphthonios, all with their introductions.

Planudes owned ms.Par.gr.1983 of the tenth or early eleventh century containing one of the oldest and most valuable versions of parts of Hermogenes and commentaries connected with them. He also possessed the later ms.Par.gr.2977, related to ms.1983.¹⁰ We do not know when he acquired these *codices*, but he may have been using them in his own rhetorical collection, which contains shorter, handy versions, specially adapted to the needs of his students.

The Planudean collection contains an appendix of four other works. The first fifteen 'examples' from the *Characters* of Theophrastos (successor of Aristotle as head of his Athenian Lyceum) were apparently first introduced into the rhetorical curriculum by Planudes (cf. below, section III of chapter 12). Of comparable interest is the *Epitome* of "On the Composition of Words" by Dionysios of Halicarnassos. Planudes was probably the rediscoverer of this shortened version, probably composed some centuries before his time.¹¹ Dionysios was one of the few outstanding ancient Greek writers on literary and rhetorical criticism. The treatise of which this was an abbreviated version is concerned with the methods and the desirable qualities of a lit-

⁷ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, pp. 358–59.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 126–27, 165, 359, 403.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹⁰ G. Aujac (1974), ref. II.1, pp. 32, 36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 39.

erary composition. Planudes was introducing fresh materials for instruction in rhetoric, including writings (like Dionysios) of greater intellectual value than the scholastic teachings of Hermogenes.

It was symptomatic of the high estimation of rhetoric among the Byzantines that Joseph the Philosopher, should have made it the first topic in his *Encyclopaedia*, completed around 1323. Of course, his account of it was based chiefly on Hermogenes and, despite his mastery of Aristotelian philosophy, Joseph did not discuss Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.¹²

In a civilization where classical learning was a hallmark of social status, the correspondence of scholars and other members of the educated elite was bound to be full of erudite allusions and to form a special kind of rhetorical display of learning. People assembled and edited selections of their own letters. The surviving collections of the letters of Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus, Maximos Planudes, George Lakapenos and Demetrios Kydones (to cite the ones used in this book) are probably based on such deliberate selections. Furthermore, there were also collections of letters assembled in the early centuries of the Christian era by professional rhetoricians. They were eagerly recopied by Byzantine scholars as models and contained much that was spurious. In R. Pfeiffer's words "they should not be called forgeries, because nobody in Antiquity would have been deceived by them".¹³ Some of the most astute Byzantines, too, doubted the authenticity of some of these rhetorical phantasies, as Photios did, for example, the so-called letters of Phalaris.¹⁴ To these products of school exercises were added in Byzantine manuscripts genuine letters of outstanding stylists like Libanios (fourth century A.D.) and Synesios (early fifth century A.D.).

These last two, like the great Cappadocian Church Fathers of the late fourth century, were prized as wonderful models. In the ninth century Photios devoted a letter to explaining what examples should be followed, extolling particularly St. Basil.¹⁵ The book on rhetoric in the encyclopaedia of Joseph the Philosopher, of c. 1323, contained a chapter on epistolography. He listed as models the rhetoricians of the late antiquity, Libanios and Synesios, but especially the leading Church Fathers of the fourth century, St. Gregory of Nazianzus and

¹² N. Terzaghi (1902), ref. II.6, pp. 121-27.

¹³ R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), p. 152, n. 1.

¹⁴ R. Henry, ed., *Photius, Bibliothèque* (Budé ed., Paris, 1959), p. xvii and n. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

St. Basil. Simplicity was recommended, but also ornament in the form of citations of ancient writers and of myths. But concision was not a virtue.¹⁶

The main core of the Byzantine epistolary collections, preserving very ancient models (largely spurious), can be traced to transliterations into minuscule of the ninth and tenth centuries. The most important of the *codices* descending from these transliterations (ms.S) was largely destroyed in the fire in the Spanish Escorial library in 1671. Fortunately there survive several copies of it, made in Byzantine scriptoria before that disaster, of which the most important is the Florentine ms.Laur.57.12. It was the distinctive feature of ms.S and its progeny that, with one exception, perhaps due to genuine ignorance, all the letters are attributed to authors who were believed to have flourished not later than the first century A.D.¹⁷

Of course, most of the letters for which ms.Laur.57.12 is a primary source are not authentic. But the seventeen letters purporting to have been written by Chion of Heraclea (d. 352 B.C.) form a case apart. They are a work of fiction clothed in epistolary form, but attempting to retell events that really happened.¹⁸

Among the *codices* of epistolary collections dating from the reign of Andronikos II should be singled out the 264 letters of Libanios edited by George Lakapenos (below, chapter 14) and the Florentine ms.Laur.32.33, copied in the last decade of the thirteenth century, containing 115 letters of Synesios (fos. 1–38).¹⁹

III

In section II of chapter 3 I have discussed the elaboration of schegography (use of selected texts for a minute exposition of every aspect of language) as a method of commenting on ancient Attic Greek. I mentioned the progress in applying it by some of the most intelligent and learned teachers in the twelfth century, notably by Nikephoros

¹⁶ R. Guiland, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras, l'Homme et l'Oeuvre* (Paris, 1926), pp. 84, 259–60.

¹⁷ There is an authoritative account of these collections in A. Diller (1983), ref. II.2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 254. For further details see Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, p. 404, n. 254.

¹⁹ Fryde, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 365.

Basiliakes.²⁰ The heyday of the use of this educational device came during the Early Palaeologan Renaissance.

We are illustrating the problems involved in teaching a dead language, unintelligible to Byzantine pupils (ancient Attic Greek).²¹ The Byzantine teachers were forced to use an elaborate array of teaching devices, often complicating them excessively. Two categories of improvements were introduced by the ablest scholars. They can be best illustrated from the practice of Planudes and Moschopoulos. As in their teaching of rhetoric, in their instruction of pupils in language they introduced a number of fresh literary texts. Secondly, they tried to bring their teaching methods up to date, cutting out obsolete features and improving the range and the authenticity of the information that could be used. They were deliberate innovators.²²

My selection of examples of the teaching practices of Planudes and Moschopoulos comes from the combination of texts connected with both of them in some of the extant manuscripts. Moschopoulos may have reworked and amplified some of the educational writings of Planudes and there is much controversy (often inconclusive) about their respective contributions.²³ Planudes stands out in this field of his activities as a scholar of much greater originality than Moschopoulos. His collections of information assembled for use in more formal works testify to his wide curiosity. An alphabetically arranged list of notes in ms.Laur. 57.47, for instance, shows a very learned man. He was jotting down unusual information, various meanings of words, irregular syntactical and grammatical forms, etc.²⁴ Besides instruction in the vocabulary and orthography of ancient Attic Greek, Planudes was also trying to formulate the underlying structure of its grammar and syntax. This he did in a couple of theoretical treatises of marked originality and fascinating sophistication (see below in this section and in section V of chapter 12).

Moschopoulos mainly tended to concentrate on illustrating the meaning of words and liked to provide numerous examples from many ancient authors. His 'schedographies' are not intended to provide an

²⁰ A. Garzya, *Storia e Interpretazione di Testi Bizantini* . . . (Variorum reprints, London, 1974), especially no. XII, pp. 59–63.

²¹ This section is largely based on sources listed in section 3 of bibliography.

²² Cf. R. Webb (1994), ref. I.6, p. 88.

²³ E.g. J. J. Keaney (1971), ref. III.5.

²⁴ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, p. 377 and n. 343 on p. 408.

appreciation of the literary substance of the authors dissected by him. Preparing pupils for a rich range of verbal expression is the dominant aim. It is all a preparation for training in rhetoric. His surviving 'schedographies' often consist of short texts, a few lines in length, followed by pages of commentaries on every aspect of each word. Thus a text in the Parisian edition (1545) of his *Peri Schedon* starts with a prayer to God for Christ's blessing on the students. Its initial words ("O Lord Jesus Christ, our God"), and what follows, give rise to discussions of the vocative case, of the etymology of *Theos* (God) as well as a general treatise on all personal pronouns.²⁵

In his commentary on the *Images* of Philostratos he does nothing to explain the selected texts, but only piles up observations on individual words. "Nowhere is the meaning of the phrase elucidated." The meaning of individual words might be explained, "but this proves simply to be a starting point for a discussion of related terms".²⁶

Moschopoulos also composed a general manual on grammar arranged by question and answer (*Erotemata*). In the eyes of many Byzantine grammarians, in its practical arrangement it superseded all other grammatical manuals. This was the opinion of Constantine Laskaris, a distinguished scholar active in Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century.²⁷

A good example of the huge grammatical and 'schedographic' collections commissioned by teachers of that age is offered by the Florentine ms. Laur. 55.7.²⁸ It contains 447 folios and includes many of the grammatical manuals and 'schedographies' attributed to Planudes and Moschopoulos, as well as a number of important texts by other authors. There are at least fifty separate items. The first part, completed in December 1314, starts with the *Erotemata* of Moschopoulos. As he probably did not die until 1316,²⁹ this may be the earliest known version of his useful treatise, copied in his lifetime.

The bulk of this *codex* was written somewhat later. It contains several very ancient and rare grammatical treatises or excerpts from

²⁵ R. Webb (1994), ref. I.6, p. 86.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²⁷ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, p. 376. For Constantine Laskaris see H. Rabe, *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 45 (1928), pp. 1–7.

²⁸ Bandini's list of its contents is incomplete (*Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Medicae-Laurentianae*, vol. II, Florence, 1764, coll. 244–68). See for my discussion of its more important contents ref. I.2 (1996), vol. I, pp. 374–79, 407–8.

²⁹ H. Hunger, *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung* (1973), no. XX, p. 142.

them. Some were inherited from the Alexandrian scholarship of the imperial period, including writings of Herodian (second half of the second century A.D.) and a brief *Enchiridion* on poetic metres by his contemporary, Hephæstion.³⁰ There are also some writings of the early Byzantine grammarians. They include Choiroboskos, a prolific writer of grammatical works, active between c. 750 and c. 825, as well as the oldest Byzantine treatise on syntax, by Michael Synkellos (810–813).

The items attributable to Planudes and Moschopoulos include their commentaries on selected writings of Philostratos, which I shall be discussing below. There is also a Planudean commentary on a selection of ancient epigrams, some of which Planudes edited as early as 1280–83 (in ms.Laur.32.16). In the same manuscript he edited a collection of pagan oracles of interest to Christians from a work known as the *Theosophia* (c. 500 A.D.) and they recur, with his commentary, in ms.Laur.55.7. The two principal grammatical treatises of Planudes on grammar and syntax are on fos. 378–415 and the collection closes with a treatise on selected problems of syntax written by Joannes Glykys, probably dating from the years 1315–19, when he was patriarch of Constantinople.

A similar *codex*, of 313 folios, is ms.Laur.59.44, dating probably from the late fourteenth century. It was probably copied from a *codex* put together by somebody with access to materials assembled by Manuel Moschopoulos. It contains most of his known grammatical materials and 'schedographic' collections, including some unique texts. One of the items which presumably came from his own collections is a glossary of terms derived from the historian Herodotus. Planudean materials include the two treatises on grammar and syntax.³¹

Some of the authors edited by Planudes and Moschopoulos interested them chiefly as sources of texts for instructing their pupils. I have discussed the most important of those editions in the chapters devoted to them (12 and 14). It remains to examine selections from two other authors specially valued as texts for teaching. These were the *Fables* of Aesop and two works by Philostratos, his *Heroikos* and his *Images*.

The Aesopian *Fables* were regarded by Byzantine teachers as ideal

³⁰ See on him below, section II of chapter 13.

³¹ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, p. 379; G. Bolognesi, "Antici documenti di dialettologia greca e di lessicografia erodotea", *Bollettino del Comitato per la Preparazione dell'Edizione Nazionale dei Classici Greci e Latini*, 8 (1960), pp. 73–80.

texts for the instruction of younger pupils. Their contents were amusing and they had an edifying moral purpose. They were written in a simple and yet elegant language. The first printed edition, in 1479, of a selection of 144 tales, is based on the school-edition by Planudes and includes his reworking of an ancient "Life of Aesop".³² The Planudean version of the *Fables* is attractively simple. It is often not an exact version of them but a paraphrase by Planudes.³³ In section IV of ms.Laur.55.7, with a heading describing it as the "first schedos", there is a selection of Aesop's tales by Moschopulos with his commentary. This heading suggests that it may have formed the first elementary stage of Moschopulos' grammatical teaching.³⁴

Philostratos (c. 170–c. 244/249 A.D.) was one of the most bizarre ancient writers and a literary charlatan.³⁵ His longest work was the largely fictitious "Life of Apollonios of Tyana". Aldo Manuzio, the pioneer publisher of Greek and Latin classics, described it as the worst book he had ever read.³⁶ Philostratos was a sophist, enjoying the patronage of the emperor Caracalla and of his mother, Julia Domna (d. 217).

Planudes and Moschopulos valued selections from Philostratos for the reputed perfection of his Attic Greek. Also there was a "wealth of recherché vocabulary". In both the *Heroikos* and the *Images* there was plenty of varied descriptions of violent happenings, battles, sieges, hunts.³⁷ Not all their contemporaries shared this predilection for Philostratos. John Glykys, patriarch of Constantinople (1315–19), in his treatise on *Correct Syntax*, criticised Philostratos for "linguistic innovations" from which had resulted "a host of absurdities". As he was discussing syntax he was not satisfied with discussing individual words in isolation from each other. His comments about Philostratos may have been a veiled attack on Planudes and Moschopulos.³⁸

The *Heroikos* (c. 219 A.D.) tells the stories of the Greek warriors who fought in the Trojan War.³⁹ The *Images* are descriptions of paintings which Philostratos allegedly saw at Naples, though it is

³² A. Hausrath, "Die Äsopstudien des Maximus Planudes", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 10 (1901), p. 91; B. E. Perry (1936), ref. III.7, pp. 204, 227–28.

³³ Perry, *ibid.*, pp. 218–27.

³⁴ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, p. 377.

³⁵ F. Solmsen (1941), ref. III.10, coll. 122–27; B. P. Reardon (1971), ref. III.9, pp. 185–98.

³⁶ Cited by N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.7, p. 26.

³⁷ R. Webb (1994), ref. I.6, p. 87.

³⁸ R. H. Robins (1993), ref. I.5, pp. 197–99; Webb (1994), ref. I.6, p. 95.

³⁹ F. Solmsen in his *Kleine Schriften*, II (Hildesheim 1968), p. 89.

probable that they were imaginary inventions of his own.⁴⁰

The Planudean commentary on a portion of the *Heroikos* is item no. VIII in ms.Laur.55.7, as one of its 'schedographies'. Planudes preserved the best versions of this work. A selection of 31 *Images* is included in the same manuscript as parts of two separate 'schedographies' and 26 *Images* form a part of a Moschopulean 'schedography'.⁴¹

Planudes was the author of the two most sophisticated linguistic treatises written during the reign of Andronikos II. His "Dialogue on Grammar" between a master and a pupil (modelled on the Platonic dialogues) and his work on 'Syntax' covered partly the same topics and assembled a very intelligent body of reflections on classical Greek language. I have given more detailed attention to the treatise on 'Syntax' in section V of chapter 12, in order to highlight its original treatment of the localistic use of cases in nouns and his utilization of the Latin *Grammatical Institutes* of Priscian (early 6th century A.D.).

These two works, and especially the treatise on 'Syntax', went beyond anything previously written by a Byzantine scholar. The 'Dialogue' is very readable and skilfully composed.⁴² The work on 'Syntax' is the first known attempt by a Byzantine author at a systematic exposition of this subject in a single volume. Slightly later, John Glykys (patriarch of Constantinople) produced another treatise on the same subject. It is narrower in scope than the Planudean work, as it is only concerned with nouns, while Planudes also covered verbs and other parts of speech, but, like the Planudean treatise, it is one of the most original pieces of thinking about the Greek language since antiquity.⁴³

The various Byzantine dictionaries form too miscellaneous a group to be discussed profitably here. One piece of statistical information might be instructive. The private Medici library possessed by 1494 at least seven *codices* which contained dictionaries or treatises on Greek dialects; these dated from the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁴⁴ They included etymological dictionaries which Byzantines greatly valued, though much of the information in them was, in reality, quite misguided.

⁴⁰ F. Solmsen (1941), ref. III.10, coll. 167-69.

⁴¹ L. de Lannoy (1978), ref. III.6b, pp. 155-56; Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, pp. 377-78.

⁴² Portions of it are edited in R. H. Robins (1993), ref. I.5, pp. 203-09 (with an English translation).

⁴³ R. Webb (1994), ref. I.6, pp. 94-5.

⁴⁴ Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. I, pp. 381-87.

Three out of these seven *codices* can be connected with leading scholars. A dictionary still awaiting study compiled by Planudes is now in ms.Par.gr.2667. It is described in the Medici inventory as arranged alphabetically and as derived both from old books and new ones.⁴⁵

The most important glossary of Attic words was produced by Thomas Magistros at Thessalonica (title in the 1832 edition of F. Ritschl: *Ecloga Vocum Atticarum*).⁴⁶ He used a very wide range of earlier *lexica* and added numerous citations from leading Greek writers, often giving not only the author's name but also the title of the work cited. Some of the citations from poets quote entire lines. The Athenian historian Thucydides was his favourite source and the comic dramatist Aristophanes was well represented. His *lexicon* became immensely popular and survives in a large number of manuscripts.⁴⁷

A short treatise on Ionic and Doric dialects has been attributed to Moschopulos. The Ionic section mainly reproduces similar earlier works, but the section on the Doric dialect is different from anything else known to us and may have been an original creation of Moschopulos. Among manuscripts cited earlier, the Florentine ms.Laur. 59.44 contains it. Significantly, this *codex* appears to be a copy of a manuscript written by somebody who had access to Moschopulean materials (cf. above in this section). As sources of his Doric *lexicon* Moschopulos used both citations from ancient writers and old *scho lia* to various Greek works.⁴⁸

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⁴⁶ On the Greek dialects see C. D. Buck, *Introduction to the History of the Greek Dialects* (2nd ed., London, 1928), pp. 1–14.

⁴⁷ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.3, vol. II, p. 44; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.7, p. 248.

⁴⁸ G. Bolognesi, *loc. cit.* (1960); S. A. Cengarle (1970), ref. III.2, pp. 71–80. See also O. Mazal, "Ein Traktat über den dorischen Dialekt", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 58 (1965), p. 293. The text was edited by F. Garlin in *Rivista Indo-Greco-Italica*, 3 (1919).

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CHAPTER TWELVE

MAXIMOS PLANUDES

I

In the previous chapter I referred to the conventional activities of Planudes as a teacher of traditional Byzantine scholastic disciplines.¹ It is his other, more original studies which made him the most eminent Byzantine scholar of his time. Though he only lived some fifty years, his scholarly achievements were prodigious. "Most of the extant classical literature passed through his hands, or, at least, beneath his eyes, and still bears traces of him."²

The exceptionally wide range of Planudes' interests makes it possible to speculate about his inmost views. The high quality of the Latin texts that he chose to translate is particularly illuminating, including Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, some Ovid and the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. In most cases we know too little about the most eminent Byzantine writers to explore what are otherwise virtually unexplored aspects of their personalities but in the case of Planudes one can, at least, think aloud about this. My chapter on him is an attempt in this direction.

Under Michael VIII, and in the early part of the reign of Andronikos II, Planudes became involved in the religious controversies of that time. The experience was dangerous and might have ended his career disastrously (see below, section IX). Thereafter Planudes avoided religious polemics and confined himself to his favourite activities: teaching and editing of ancient Greek texts.

Planudes was certainly appreciated by Emperor Andronikos II. We have one of his letters to the emperor, at least one formal panegyric of Andronikos II and his son, and the text of an Easter sermon preached at the imperial court.³ During some part of his career

¹ Sections II–IV of chapter 11.

² A. Diller (1975), ref. II.8, p. 89.

³ A. Laiou (1978), ref. I.8; L. G. Westerink (1966), ref. I.15; P. A. M. Leone (1991), ref. I.10, letter 1, pp. 1–5 (in 1299). See also sections VII and IX, below.

he resided at the monastery of Chora, fairly near to the principal imperial palace of Blachernai, and, at least one of his manuscripts (Vat.gr.177) was written there.⁴ By c. 1299 he had moved to another Constantinopolitan monastery, *Tou Apokaleptou*, but at least some of the manuscripts he used at Chora remained there and were available later to Metochites and Gregoras (below, chapters 16 and 18).

Planudes thought of himself as a poet. Much of his poetic output consisted of short poems, often to celebrate some notable event.⁵ Altogether we have several hundred lines of his hexametric poetry. They display a good technical imitation of this type of ancient verse but he was really an outstanding textual scholar rather than an inspired poet.⁶ He had a first-rate analytical mind: his commentary on the first two books of the *Arithmetica* of Diophantos, one of the ablest ancient mathematicians, suffices to prove that (section II of chapter 17). He loved books and was an expert binder of them. He sought the best parchment for his own manuscripts.⁷ Like many dedicated students of the past, he was a historical romantic. He was fascinated by the temple to Zeus built by the emperor Hadrian at Cyzicus on the Sea of Marmara, which because of its gigantic size was regarded in antiquity as one of the wonders of the world. He recalled his enthusiasm in a letter to a friend with whom he had visited it some years earlier.⁸ At that time it was still fairly intact, as it was even two centuries later, when Ciriaco of Ancona described and drew it in 1431.⁹

The only recent, fairly systematic review of the scholarly achievements of Planudes was published in 1983 by N. G. Wilson.¹⁰ He stressed the unusually wide range of the literary and scientific interests of Planudes. However, Dr. Wilson is justifiably critical about Planudes' limitations as a textual critic and an emendator of the

⁴ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, p. 69. For the proximity of Chora to Blachernai see P. A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, I (New York, 1966), p. 13.

⁵ K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, coll. 2215–20.

⁶ I. Ševčenko, "The Palaeologan Renaissance" in W. Treadgold (ed.), *Renaissances before the Renaissance. Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Stanford, 1984), pp. 202–3.

⁷ K. Wendel (1941), ref. I.13, pp. 79–80.

⁸ K. Wendel (1940), ref. I.12, pp. 432–38.

⁹ B. Ashmole, "Cyriac of Ancona and the Temple of Hadrian at Cyzicus", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 19 (1956).

¹⁰ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, pp. 230–41.

more unusual classical authors, though he is unduly harsh about the recurrent failure to produce radical innovations.

Dr. Wilson criticized Planudes for omitting texts that he regarded as indecent. Some very puerile renderings of Ovid's amatory poetry were attributed to Planudes, though Dr. Wilson rightly suspended judgement about Planudes' authorship of them, as there is no assured textual evidence about this.¹¹ That he had avoided classical texts that were plainly immoral is intelligible in a sincerely pious monk and a teacher of young pupils. His Byzantine contemporaries clearly regarded him as a wonderful model scholar and an admirable man.

In discussing the probable contribution of Planudes to the improvement of classical texts I have to follow the comments of the modern editors on each of them. There is a general pattern in these. The older editors tended to minimize the value of his emendations. They become more appreciative as they approach the present day.

In 1299, under his direction, was copied at the monastery of Apokaleptos at Constantinople a very rare work, a paraphrase of the *Gospel of St. John*, probably by the Egyptian poet Nonnos (5th century A.D.). Twenty years earlier Planudes had preserved our only text of his much longer epic, *The Dionysiaca* (see below). Planudes conjectured that the same man may have written both those poems. The paraphrase of the Gospel is written in good classical hexameters (as is the *Dionysiaca*) and in the Homericising language of the late Greek epic poetry. Planudes inserted in the Venetian ms. Marcianus 481 an autograph comment:

We should note that the reading of Hellenic [*i.e.* pagan] literature has always been an object of longing and delight for lovers of learning, and particularly the reading of the poems of Homer, because of the grace and variety of the language. That is why the present metrical paraphrase has been written in heroic metre, to give pleasure to lovers of learning and literature.¹²

This blend of Christian content and classical form was a perfect example of Byzantine Christian humanism, though it is notable that Planudes stressed here form, not content.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18, 230–31.

¹² R. Browning (1995), ref. I.1, p. 21.

II

The earliest classical enterprise that can be securely attributed to Planudes is preserved in the Florentine ms. Laur. 32.16.¹³ It consists of a large selection of choice Greek hexametric verse, mostly pagan, though including some poems of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, whom the Byzantines regarded as the greatest Christian poet. That manuscript contains some unique texts and valuable, distinctive versions of some others. They may have been assembled for use in his teaching.

The manuscript was partly written by Planudes and partly by eight different scribes, whose copies were later checked and annotated by him. It was begun in 1280 when he was still a layman (Manuel), but was completed after he had become the monk Maximos *c.* 1283. As a special favour I was permitted to inspect it.

It is now in a confused state caused by rebinding and its original order has been disturbed. It seems best, therefore to discuss its contents in the chronological order of the authors, confining myself to the more important ones.

The quality of his unusual readings and obvious emendations unavoidably varied, but they should be treated, in many cases, as interesting, or even valuable.¹⁴ At least, they should be accorded the same attention as innovations and good emendations by modern editors.

This issue arises sharply over his version of the *Theogonia* by Hesiod (late 8th century B.C.). Hesiod was, alongside Homer, one of the oldest Greek poets, and almost as highly prized. His *Theogonia* spoke of the gods, of the origin of the world, and of the events that followed, ending in the establishment of the present order. These myths were transmuted into some of the later Greek dramas, most movingly in some of the tragedies of Aeschylus, the effective pioneer of the Athenian tragic theatre. The profound ethical and religious content of the Aeschylean dramas breathed the spirit of Hesiod's poetry.¹⁵

¹³ There is a description of it in A. Turyn (1972), ref. II.32, vol. I, pp. 28–39, with plates 16–23 in vol. II.

¹⁴ Cf. K. Wendel (1940), ref. I.12, pp. 421–22 (emendations); C. F. Russo (ed.), *Scutum Hesiodi* (2nd ed., Florence, 1965), p. 41 and J. Irigoin (1963), ref. II.22, p. 423 (unique readings and probable improvements).

¹⁵ M. Untersteiner, *Le origini della tragedia. Dalla preistoria a Eschilo* (Turin, 2nd ed., 1955), pp. 297, 333–34.

Hesiod is the "first individuality in Greek literature".¹⁶ Unlike the *Theogonia*, his *Works and Days* was largely autobiographical, but it, too, has a religious message, that Zeus, the supreme god, is the maintainer of justice.¹⁷

Planudes made some emendations to the metres and syntax of *The Works and Days*,¹⁸ but his version of the *Theogonia* is much more important. Unlike the *Works and Days*, the *Theogonia* is not preserved in any manuscript earlier than the time of Planudes and his version in ms.Laur.32.16 may be our earliest complete text. Some of its readings agree with ancient papyri or with citations by several ancient writers and were probably derived from collations with older *codices*, now lost.¹⁹

Planudes prefaced his versions of Hesiod by a "Life of Hesiod" derived from Joannes Tzetzes, an erudite, but very eccentric Byzantine scholar, active in the second half of the twelfth century. Planudes omitted some unreliable lore included by Tzetzes and reduced his text to essentials.²⁰ This was Planudes at his best.

Ms.Laur.32.16 does not include any poems of Pindar, one of the most important Greek poets of the fifth century B.C. Only four out of seventeen collections of his poems survived into the thirteenth century, celebrating victories at the great Panhellenic sportive contests. J. Irigoin believes that the texts of 12 (out of the known 14) 'Olympian' poems in the Milanese ms.Ambr.C.222 inf. contain a Planudean edition that preserves many uniquely good readings, derived from one of the three identifiable transliterations of Pindar. There is no absolute proof that Planudes was responsible for it, but a persuasive case can be made out. Some of the textual improvements are due to correction of the metre. The Milanese manuscript has a hand similar to some of the writing in ms.Laur.32.16, and this would date it to an early stage of Planudes' activities.²¹

¹⁶ Review of M. L. West (1966) by F. Solmsen in *Gnomon*, 40 (1968), ref. II.34, pp. 22, n. 1.

¹⁷ M. L. West (1978), ref. II.35.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁹ M. L. West (1966), ref. II.34, pp. 56-57; F. Solmsen (1983), ref. II.31, p. xi.

²⁰ A. Colonna, "I prolegomeni al Esiode e la Esiodea di Giovanni Tzetzes" *Bol. Com.Ed.Naz.*, new ser. II (1953), p. 33. The text of Tzetzes' "Life of Hesiod" is on pp. 36-39.

²¹ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. II.21 pp. 240-69; R. Browning (1977), ref. II.4, pp. 15-16.

Planudes was clearly fascinated by Hellenistic poetry and ms.Laur. 32.16 contains an anthology of Hellenistic poets.²² Particularly valuable is the Planudean text of the *Argonautica* by Apollonios of Rhodes. This is the only surviving large-scale Hellenistic epic. It was "one of the most important poems written in third-century Alexandria". Its sophisticated and heroic story was one of the major influences on the greatest of the Latin epics, the *Aeneid* of Virgil.²³

Planudes offered a version that contained numerous readings (often attractive) different from all the other *codices*. The probable explanation is that he collated the tenth-century minuscule ms.Laur.32.9 (discussed in chapter 2), or some copy of it, with one, or more, ancient manuscripts rediscovered by him. They may have included untransliterated *codices* in capital letters.²⁴

Theokritos of Syracuse was a contemporary of Apollonios at Alexandria.²⁵ Theokritos often used the Doric dialect of his native Sicily, though it was a Doric artificially adapted to his poetic purposes.²⁶ One of the autograph Planudean passages in ms.Laur.32.16 is a short tract by Planudes "On the dialect of Theokritos" (fo. 174r).

That Sicilian poet, though not a creator of the ancient tradition of pastoral poetry, raised it to a new level of beauty. It consisted of usually fairly short works, the opposite of heroic epics, and it spoke chiefly of guardians of flocks of sheep and goats and of herds of cattle, of the love of those men for girls, of music and songs, of peaceful rural landscapes.²⁷ In the writings ascribed to Theokritos (30 so-called 'Idylls', though not all certainly authentic) we are transported

into an unreal world . . . but everything is nevertheless full of scintillating life, full of sincere feeling and subtle psychology, through which they are of eternal value.²⁸

Especially through his influence on Virgil's bucolic poetry, Theokritos has shaped the whole European tradition of this kind of literature.

²² There is a valuable account of Hellenistic poetry by A. W. Bulloch (1985), ref. II.6.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

²⁴ M. Haslam (1978), ref. II.20, pp. 70-72.

²⁵ There is a good account by A. W. Bulloch (1985), ref. II.6, pp. 570-86.

²⁶ A. S. F. Gow (1952), ref. II.17, vol. I, p. LXXXIII.

²⁷ B. A. Van Groningen, "Quelques problèmes de la poésie bucolique grecque", *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 11 (1958).

²⁸ B. A. Van Groningen in *ibid.*, 18 (1965), p. 48.

No extant manuscripts of Theokritos seem to be earlier than the thirteenth century. Carlo Gallavotti, his most thorough editor, knew of 178 *codices*.²⁹ Many of them can be directly connected with Planudes or his leading disciples. One attraction of the literary editions of the early Palaeologan Renaissance was their provision of detailed commentaries on the text. In the case of Theokritos we have commentaries on the first eight 'Idylls' by Planudes and a further elaboration of them by his pupil Moschopoulos. They were based in part on Ancient collections of *scholia* supplemented by paraphrases of these Byzantine editors.³⁰

The versions of the first eighteen 'Idylls' of Theokritos in ms. Laur.32.16 (fos. 174v–189v) is often different from those in all other early *codices*.³¹ Texts of thirteen of them are in Planudes' own hand. Some twenty years later he again copied three 'Idylls', textually similar to the versions in ms.32.16, though with some variants (in ms.Par.gr.2722).³²

The treatment of these Planudean versions by modern editors has been unduly dismissive. Gallavotti, in particular, while recognizing their great interest for illustrating Planudes' textual scholarship in restoring correct poetic metres and dialectical forms,³³ has disregarded his readings in ms.32.16. He viewed them as hopelessly contaminated by conjectures.³⁴ Yet a number of his readings are identical with ancient papyri, while differing from all other Theokritean manuscripts of the thirteenth century (e.g. in 'Idyll' 18).³⁵ Perhaps future scholars will be more prepared to accept that Planudes may have collated older *codices* now lost, and that many of his unusual readings derive from these and not from conjectures.

Moschos of Syracuse appears to have been writing in Alexandria around the middle of the second century B.C.³⁶ Planudes attributed

²⁹ A. S. F. Gow (1952), ref. II.17, vol. I, pp. xxxiii, liv.

³⁰ K. Wendel (ed.), *Scholia in Theocritum Venera* (Leipzig, 1914); Gallavotti (1934), ref. II.12, p. 350 and Gallavotti (1936), ref. II.14, pp. 46 and 50, n. 1.

³¹ Gallavotti (1934), ref. II.13, p. 291.

³² N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. II.36, pp. 390–91.

³³ Gallavotti (1934), ref. II.12, pp. 360, 363 and ref. II.13 (1934), pp. 291, 311.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, ref. II.12, p. 360 and ref. II.13, pp. 300, 312. Cf. Gow (1952), ref. II.17, vol. I, p. xlvi.

³⁵ Gow (1952), *ibid.*, vol. I, p. lv and n. 4; Gallavotti (1955 ed.), ref. II.15, p. 265; N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. II.36, p. 392.

³⁶ Ph. E. Legrand (ed. 1967), ref. II.27, pp. 134–75; W. Bühler (1960), ref. II.5 and review by H. Lloyd-Jones (1961), *ibid.*; J. Irigoin (1963), ref. II.22; A. W. Bulloch (1985), ref. II.6, pp. 610–11.

to him (correctly) in ms.Laur.32.16 his two best-known poems, the *Europa*, in 166 hexameters, and the brief *Fugitive Eros*. He followed these by the *Megawa* (wife of Heracles), without attribution, and its ascription to Moschos is, indeed, uncertain.

The *Eros* and the *Europa* are charming poems, amusing and playful, though Aphrodite's description of the fugitive Eros touches on the terrible erotic potential of his activities. Moschos' art anticipated Ovid. Echoes of it are scattered in later ancient poetry, Greek and Latin.

All those poems were copied personally by Planudes and his versions may provide our oldest extant texts. Planudes introduced numerous emendations. Some are excellent, but much more often they are erroneous because of Planudes' ignorance of the original versions,³⁷ now better known to us.³⁸

Nikander was, perhaps, a contemporary of Moschos at Alexandria.³⁹ His *Theriaka* and *Alexipharmaka* follow Moschos in ms.Laur.32.16, likewise in Planudes' own hand. They comprise medical and pharmacological lore put into verse. One much earlier (and the best) version exists in a manuscript of the tenth or the eleventh century (ms.Par.suppl.gr.247), but there are now many gaps in it and the Planudean version in ms.Laur.32.16 provides one of the best sources for reconstructing the missing passages.⁴⁰

The two works attributed to an Oppian cannot possibly have been written by the same author.⁴¹ The poem in five books (some 3500 verses) "On Fishing" (the *Halieutika*), written by Oppian of Cilicia in 177–80 A.D., is a witty and learned piece. It is one of the rare Greek poems of that century that survives and is written in Hellenistic hexameters.⁴² The other work, "On Hunting" (the *Kynegetika*) was written by a namesake, Oppian of Apamea in Syria, and dates from 211–17 A.D. Its author was a much more ignorant and credulous man. In ms.Laur.32.16 Planudes copied, partly in his own hand, the

³⁷ Irigoin (1963), *ibid.*, p. 423.

³⁸ Some later manuscripts, using better sources, provide superior texts. Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1961), ref. II.5, p. 36.

³⁹ Gow and Schofield (1953), ref. II.18, p. 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–13.

⁴¹ There is a good summary of the evidence in M. Hadas, *A History of Greek Literature* (New York, 1962), pp. 221–22.

⁴² F. Fajen, "Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der *Halieutica* des Oppian", *Hermes*, 107 (1979); D. Robin, "The manuscript tradition of Oppian's *Halieutica*", *Bol.Com.Ed.Naz.*, 3rd ser., 2 (1981).

Kyneyetika, followed, entirely as his autograph, by the *Halieutika* (fos. 270–96).

In 405 A.D. Eunapios remarked that “the Egyptians are mad on poetry”.⁴³ Planudes included two of their epics in ms.Laur.32.16 (Tryphiodoros and Nonnos). Tryphiodoros probably wrote in the fourth century A.D.⁴⁴ The version of his only surviving poem, *The Fall of Troy*, preserved by Planudes is our earliest and, probably, the best text⁴⁵ (for Nonnos see below).

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330–c. 389 A.D.) was the only Christian poet used routinely for teaching Attic Greek in Byzantine schools.⁴⁶ Planudes copied in his own hand a selection of his poetry in ms.32.16. He was not interested in Gregory’s ‘theological’ poems, but only in autobiographical and devotional ones and in poetry with a moral message.

For Planudes, as for Gregory, there was no conflict between admiration for all that was best in ancient Greek literature and the use of Hellenic culture in the service of Christianity. Gregory’s Christian humanism was bound to appeal strongly to Planudes. Hence his inclusion of fifty-six poems of St. Gregory⁴⁷ in what was otherwise almost entirely a collection of pagan poetry.

We have some 180 poems of varying length attributed to St. Gregory, comprising on R. Keydell’s estimate over 16,000 verses.⁴⁸ Gregory was the first outstanding Christian poet. Like his Greek pagan predecessors, he experimented with a rich variety of metres and poetic devices. But in content much of his poetry had no precedents and, as he said in one of his poems, Christian poetry excelled by its contents, though form also mattered, but less.⁴⁹

There was a personal, autobiographical note in several of his poems. Their main theme was the search for God and the spiritual

⁴³ F. Vian (1976), ref. II.33, p. xvi.

⁴⁴ A. Cameron, “Wandering poets: a literary movement in Byzantine Egypt” in his *Literature and Society in the Early Byzantine World* (London, 1985), no. III, p. 218, n. 5 and his *Claudian* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 18, 478–82.

⁴⁵ K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, coll. 2223, 2251.

⁴⁶ W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1962), pp. 78–79; N. G. Wilson, “The church and classical studies in Byzantium”, *Antike und Abendland*, 16 (1970), p. 70.

⁴⁷ They are listed in Bandini (Greek), II, coll. 143–45.

⁴⁸ R. Keydell in *Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, 7 (1953), p. 134; M. Wittich (ed.), *Gregory von Nizianz, Briefe* (Stuttgart, 1981), p. 64.

⁴⁹ S. Salaville (1931), ref. VII.5, p. 32 and n. 2.

sustenance that Gregory had found through his quest. In these personal poems Gregory created an entirely new type of spiritual autobiography.⁵⁰ It was in keeping with Planudes' love of "classical good letters" that he should have begun his selection with one of these autobiographical poems, in which Gregory spoke of his youthful "love for the glory of literature which had been assembled by the East and the West at Athens, the ornament of Hellas", though he went on to say "that the knowledge of letters thus acquired should be devoted solely to the pursuit of the infinitely wise divine Word".⁵¹ Planudes included also five more of Gregory's similar poems.⁵²

The longest single item in ms.32.16 is the *Dionysiaka* by Nonnos of Panopolis (fos. 9r-173r).⁵³ His name is now missing in the manuscript, but was probably there as late as the time of Poliziano, who annotated it (after 1481).⁵⁴ The Planudean copy preserves the only complete text of this epic in 48 books, full of Ancient mythological lore and composed by a very learned man. It was copied by one of the scribes employed by Planudes, but was corrected by himself. He supplied some verses that seemed missing, as he admitted.⁵⁵ The text from which the copy was made is described as an old manuscript; it was evidently a transliterated Greek *codex*. The copy seems carefully executed, but the text is less good than a version in a papyrus fragment.

A poet of the same name produced an adaptation, in hexameters, of the *Gospel of St. John*. In an autograph copy (ms.Marc.481) that Planudes made of it some twenty years after the writing of ms.Laur. 32.16, he remarked that some attributed it to the author of the Dionysiac poem.⁵⁶ He seems to have been right. The problem which has engaged all the students of Nonnos is the ascription to the same man of a blatantly pagan epic and of a Christian work. The *Paraphrase of the Gospel of St. John* seems to be the earlier of the two, while the

⁵⁰ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, II, pp. 481, 483-84.

⁵¹ Bandini (Greek), II, col. 143; S. Salaville (1931), ref. VII.5, p. 31 and notes 2-4.

⁵² Bandini, *ibid.*, nos. 2-3. Cf. R. Keydell in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 43 (1950), pp. 334-37.

⁵³ My discussion of Nonnos is based mainly on R. Keydell's (ref. II.24) and F. Vian's (ref. II.33) editions and my book (ref. I.5), I, pp. 327-29.

⁵⁴ Fryde, *ibid.*, p. 328.

⁵⁵ F. Vian (1976), ref. II.33, p. LXIII; R. Browning (1977), ref. II.4, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Vian, *ibid.*, p. xi.

Dionysiaka may have been written between *c.* 450 and *c.* 470 A.D.⁵⁷

The apparent problem is created by modern scholars and originates in the misunderstanding of the rhetorical education (common to cultivated pagans and Christians) and of the complex outlook of the learned elites of the fifth century. Whilst it is true that the *Dionysiaka* is an epic about one of the principal pagan gods of the Greek East, and so regarded there in late antiquity, there is in it no trace of any anti-Christian polemics.⁵⁸ It is probable that Nonnos was always a Christian,⁵⁹ but also a man in love with ancient learning, as were many of his cultivated contemporaries.

On fos. 381v–382r Planudes himself copied thirteen oracles from what he called the *Theosophia*. This was “a late fifth- or early sixth-century Christian work” in which there were selected from a collection of oracles made by the Neoplatonist Porphyry the ones possibly of relevance to Christians. Planudes excerpted from it a selection that particularly interested him.⁶⁰ Excerpts from the *Theosophia* were also copied into two later *codices* connected with him.⁶¹

On fos. 3–6 (now displaced at the start, but probably originally at the end of ms.32.16) Planudes copied a number of epigrams derived from a collection assembled in its last form in the early tenth century (the so-called *Greek Anthology*). Some others were copied on fos. 383r–384r. This is the first evidence of his interest in this type of poetry, of which he assembled a much larger collection later in his life (section IV, below).

Closely connected with the Hellenistic poetry collected in ms. Laur.32.16 is a poem in 270 hexameters known as Planudes’ *Idyll*, modelled on the ‘Idylls’ of Theokritos and consisting of a dialogue between two peasants. It is preserved in the Neapolitan ms. Borbon.165 (II.F.9), dating from *c.* 1325, copied in a scholarly circle connected with Planudes.⁶²

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

⁵⁸ G. W. Bowersock, *L’Ellenismo nel Mondo Tardoantico* (Bari, 1992), pp. 69–70, 73.

⁵⁹ Cf. recently E. Livrea, “Il poeta e il vescovo. La questione Nonniana e la storia”, *Prometheus*, 13 (1987), pp. 97–123.

⁶⁰ A. Cameron (1993), ref. II.7, pp. 211–12.

⁶¹ A. Turyn (1972), ref. II.32, I. p. 39.

⁶² *Ibid.*, and K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, col. 2219.

III

Planudes studied, and sometimes tried to improve, a number of writings of other major authors. In some of these he made a contribution to the preservation of good texts and in the cases of Pausanias, and of some of the writings of Plutarch, may have been instrumental in saving works that otherwise might have become lost.

It is notoriously difficult to differentiate between the commentaries of Planudes and of his leading contemporaries (Moschopoulos, Demetrios Triklinios, Thomas Magistros) on the plays of the Athenian dramatists.⁶³ "Attic drama does seem not to have been among Planudes' main interests";⁶⁴ but a number of manuscripts contain marginal *scholía* showing that Planudes commented on portions of the three plays of Sophocles (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*) and the three plays of Euripides (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae*), selected for use in the schools. In the latter case he chiefly commented on the *Hecuba*. But, apparently, he never edited these Sophoclean and Euripidean 'triads'.⁶⁵

Thucydides is generally regarded as the greatest ancient Greek historian (second half of the fifth century B.C.) and a succession of Byzantine historians modelled their style on him. We still have two Thucydidean manuscripts which belonged to Planudes. One had been owned previously by Theodora Raulaina, niece of Emperor Michael VIII, and Planudes wrote in it a notice of the death of this friend of his on 7 December 1300. This manuscript, ms.Monacensis (München) gr.430, dates from the eleventh century and appears to descend from one of the two main archetypes of Thucydides. Planudes wrote a number of marginal notes in it. His second codex (ms.Kassel.hist., fol. 3) began to be annotated by him in 1302.⁶⁶

Theophrastus (c. 372–c. 285 B.C.), succeeded Aristotle in 322 as the head of the Athenian Academy. The 'Life' by Diogenes Laertius attributed to him over two hundred works, but only a few have survived complete. Theophrastus was a teacher of philosophy and a scientific inquirer rather than an original philosopher. His *Characters*

⁶³ A. Garzya (1974), ref. II.10, no. XXIII, p. 200.

⁶⁴ H. C. Günther, *The Manuscripts and the Transmission of the Palaeologan Scholia on the Euripidean Triad* (Darmstadt, 1955), p. 34.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–34.

⁶⁶ S. Kougéas (1907), ref. II.25; G. B. Alberti (ed.), *Thucydidis Historiae*, I (Rome, 1972), pp. xvi, xl–xli; B. Hemmerdinger, *Essai sur l'Histoire du Texte de Thucydide* (Paris, 1955), pp. 45–46.

(319 B.C.), which attracted Planudes, are unlike any other of his works.⁶⁷ They may have reproduced lectures and may have been intended as entertainment. They consist of 30 brief sketches of people, each of whom has some disagreeable trait. They are perfectly worded and finely observed. It is his one work that produced imitation through the ages and continued to be remembered.

All its texts have been preserved exclusively as parts of rhetorical collections,⁶⁸ and Planudes so treated them (above, Chapter 11). At some early stage they had been divided into two books (nos. 1–15, 16–30). Planudes rediscovered the first volume, either in ms.Par.gr. 1983 (10th–11th century) or some copy of it.⁶⁹ Some of the descendants of his edition actually name him as its compiler (e.g. Florentine ms.San Marco 294).

As with the works of Plutarch, Planudes sought to rediscover a more complete set of the *Characters*. A fuller collection, including character-sketches 16–23, preserved in the München ms.Monacensis gr.327, may have been the product of his subsequent discoveries.⁷⁰ “The text offered by the medieval manuscripts may be the most corrupt of any major work of Greek Antiquity” and the papyri fragments show that this was an ancient feature.⁷¹ Planudes possibly emended his versions.

Planudes made an important contribution to the preservation of good texts of the historical geographer, Strabo and, possibly, Pausanias. Geography does not seem to have interested most Byzantine scholars. Hence the prolonged neglect of Ptolemy’s *Geography* until Planudes brought it back into circulation (section VII, below). But Strabo’s *Geography* is a historical rather than a scientific work.

Strabo (64/63 B.C.—after 20 A.D.) wrote his *Geography* late in life and it is his only surviving work. He came from an ancient aristocratic family from Asia Minor, travelled extensively and was a friend of important Romans.⁷²

⁶⁷ My account is based chiefly on the latest edition by J. Rusten (1993), ref. II.29. See also, G. Pasquali, “Sui caratteri di Teofrasto” in his *Scritti Filologici* (ed. F. Bornmann and others, Florence, 1986).

⁶⁸ N. G. Wilson, “The manuscripts of Theophrastus”, *Scriptorium*, 16 (1962), pp. 96–99.

⁶⁹ P. Steinmetz (ed.), *Theophrast. Charaktere*, (München, 1960), pp. 1, 39–40.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

⁷¹ J. Rusten (1993), ref. II.29, p. 28.

⁷² G. Aujac, *Strabon et la science de son Temps* (Paris, 1966); E. B. Fryde, “The historical interests of Guarino of Verona and his translation of Strabo’s *Geography*” in my *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), no. 3.

He stressed that geography was a Greek science⁷³ and his immense *Geography* in 17 books is the largest work of historical geography left to us from antiquity, providing a "delightful encyclopaedia of miscellaneous information". He is "still a Greek author whom it is agreeable to read".⁷⁴ It is a first-rate source of information for countries he knew well personally, especially Asia Minor (of special interest to Planudes). He furnishes much of what is known about the geographical and astronomical researches of Eratosthenes, perhaps the most original of the Hellenistic geographers (3rd century B.C.). For example, he preserved the marvellous comment of Eratosthenes, who was a complete disbeliever in the value of Homer as a geographical source, that "You will find the scene of Odysseus' wanderings when you find the cobbler who sewed up the bag of winds".⁷⁵ Strabo was a great admirer of his fellow Stoic, Poseidonios (c. 135–c. 50 B.C.), whom he extolled as "one of the most learned of the philosophers of our time".⁷⁶ He is one of the most important sources for what we know of the historical, scientific and religious writings of this outstanding Stoic scholar.

Strabo's *Geography* could never have become a manageable school-text, but the collection of excerpts from it assembled by Planudes in his *Collectanea* is the biggest item in this selection of miscellaneous texts.⁷⁷ His contribution to the preservation and emendation of Strabo has been diversely assessed by scholars. Aubrey Diller, the greatest authority on him has been cautious and so has N. G. Wilson.

The Planudean excerpts were certainly copied from the present Parisian (Bibl.Nat.) ms.gr.1393. Diller cautiously remarked that "though it is likely, it is not certain" that Planudes produced or possessed this *codex*. N. G. Wilson does not go beyond that.⁷⁸ I think it probable that it was commissioned by Planudes, especially as the person who wrote it was also responsible for writing two *codices* of Ptolemy's *Geography* with maps, which points to a Planudean commission.⁷⁹

⁷³ A. Momigliano, "Polibio, Posidonio e l'Imperialismo Romano", *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, II, 107 (1972–73), p. 694 (a copy given to me by my late friend).

⁷⁴ G. C. Richards, "Strabo: the Anatolian who failed of Roman recognition", *Greece and Rome*, 10 (1941), pp. 88, 90.

⁷⁵ P. M. Fraser, "Eratosthenes of Cyrene", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 56 (1971), p. 18 and n. 2.

⁷⁶ Aujac, *op. cit.* (1966), p. 75.

⁷⁷ A. Diller (1975), ref. II.8, p. 89.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90; Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, p. 234.

⁷⁹ Diller, *ibid.*, p. 71.

Diller regarded ms.Par.1393 as the second best *codex* of Strabo after the tenth century ms.Par.gr.1397.⁸⁰ Ms.1393 is a gigantic folio from the time of Planudes containing the whole of Strabo except for parts of book VIII and book IX, missing in the source from which it was copied.⁸¹ For books I–VII it derives from the same textual tradition as ms.1397.

There are numerous corrections in ms.1393, often peculiar to it. Diller regarded them as possibly due to Planudes.⁸² He certainly produced a number of further novel readings in the excerpts copied by him into the *Collectanea*. They have mostly been accepted as probably correct by modern editors of Strabo.⁸³ Excerpts from books 12–13 are particularly prominent, showing Planudes' special interest in his native region, as his family came from Nicomedia on the north-western coast of Asia Minor.

Speaking of these excerpts from Strabo and the ones from Pausanias, which followed next, A. Diller commented on their intelligent and attentive handling by Planudes. "He does not always quote *verbatim*, but omits, compresses, smooths over, and rounds off occasionally. He does not introduce foreign matter into his excerpts."⁸⁴

The *Description of Greece* by Pausanias was written during the reign of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 A.D.). We do not know which of several men of that name was the author. It was based on his travels, is an honest account, but needs to be checked by other sources. It has been an indispensable aid to all the modern studies of ancient Greece.⁸⁵

Pausanias attracted almost no notice during the early Byzantine period until Planudes rescued him. There are 168 excerpts in his *Collectanea*, derived from all the extant ten books, and, in extent, they amount to about half as much as the excerpts from Strabo. Planudes' manuscript was probably the archetype of all the texts we have.⁸⁶

The 'Meditations' of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (ruled 161–180 A.D.) are a fascinating text, the reflections of a predominantly Stoic

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70–76.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 89 and n. 2.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 90, n. 3.

⁸⁴ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, no. 17, p. 156.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 16; M. Casevitz and others (eds.), Pausanias, *Description de la Grèce*, I (Paris, Budé Coll., 1992), pp. ix–xxix.

⁸⁶ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, nos. 17, 18, 36. On p. 344 of no. 36 Diller suggests that "the archetype was probably Planudes' *codex*".

philosopher on his education and life as the ruler of the Roman world. He never called himself a Stoic and he gives much attention also to Plato and other thinkers. He wrote for himself, probably during the last ten years of his life.⁸⁷

The extant versions may contain much that may be corrupt. Hence old manuscripts containing excerpts deserve attention and texts copied by Planudes are among these. Ms.Laur.55.7 (a collection of grammatical works, on which see below, section V) expressly attributes some such excerpts to Planudes on fo. 251 and there are others on fos. 260 and 265–71 (only from books 4–12). They are all confined to moral precepts. Modern editors do not regard them as coming from an independent *codex* of the “Meditations”, but from older miscellaneous collections of excerpts, of uncertain provenance.⁸⁸

Plutarch (c. 46–c. 126 A.D.)⁸⁹ was a representative member of provincial Greek aristocracies who had come to accept Roman imperial rule as a guarantee of their properties and continued prosperity. He was a Roman citizen and a permanent priest at Delphi. Educated by Platonist teachers, he retained a life-long devotion to Plato’s writings, which he interpreted personally in some of his “moral essays”. He was widely-read, urbane and sincerely pious. He wrote in the Doric dialect of his native Boeotia, but his style was quite varied, to suit his subject matter. “Of all the Greeks he was one of the easiest to enjoy and appreciate as a writer”. He was not a disciplined scholar, nor in any “strict sense a learned man”. But there was obvious sincerity and creative originality in his ethical and psychological interests and he was a graceful essayist, kind and well-intentioned.⁹⁰

In 1294, in a letter to a friend announcing his project to edit all

⁸⁷ P. A. Brunt, “Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*”, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 64 (1974); E. V. Maltese, “Postille ai Pensieri di Marco Aurelio”, *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*, 76 (1986); E. Amis “The Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius” in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, Der Prinzipat*, 36, pt. 3 (Berlin, 1989).

⁸⁸ A. S. L. Farquharson (ed.), *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus*, I (Oxford, 1944), pp. xxii, xxx–xxxiv. J. J. Keaney in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 64 (1971), p. 313 has called the source of these excerpts “a scholastic anthology”.

⁸⁹ One of the best biographies is by D. A. Russell (1972), ref. II.28. For the lasting influence of Plato on him see C. Froidefrond, “Plutarque et le Platonisme” in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, Der Prinzipat*, 36, pt. 1 (Berlin, 1987), pp. 184–233.

⁹⁰ A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, I (Oxford, 1945), pp. 54–55; B. A. Van Groningen, “General literary tendencies in the second century A.D.”, *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 18 (1965), pp. 45–46, 48; M. I. Finley (ed.), *The Portable Greek Historians* (1959, Pelican reprint 1980), p. 16.

the works of Plutarch, Planudes explained that he loved him dearly.⁹¹ Plutarch's high moral tone, his distaste for anything improper in literature, as well as the ease and charm of his style were bound to appeal to Planudes. Besides, Plutarch offered an encyclopedia of Hellenic knowledge which Planudes was most eager to recover. Other leading members of the court circle, like Theodore Metochites, the favourite adviser of Andronikos II, shared this predilection for Plutarch.⁹²

We possess today perhaps about half of the treatises written by Plutarch.⁹³ They might be divided into three main categories. There are the *Lives of the Illustrious Greeks and Romans*. Twenty-four pairs once existed, each pairing a Greek with a Roman, out of which one pair had been lost. There appear to have been two separate transliterations of them into minuscule. These resulted in a two-volume edition and a three-volume edition, Planudes using chiefly the latter. Plutarch wrote his *Lives* partly to provide edifying moral lessons and examples of conduct that should be imitated. When his heroes were not only statesmen but also thinkers, like Cicero, he was apt to treat that intellectual aspect very inadequately.⁹⁴

He also wrote a series of the lives of Roman emperors. To judge by the only two surviving ones (Galba and Otho, in 69 A.D.), he was chiefly concerned with providing accounts of their periods as rulers. Planudes inserted those two within his edition of the so-called *Moralia*. They acquired this description from the initial twenty-one 'ethical' treatises in medieval Byzantine collections, but it is a misnomer for the rest and "Diverse essays" would be a more appropriate title. Some are deeply moving (e.g. the "Consolation to my wife" on the death of their daughter).

"No other classical author, apart from those occupying a central place in the school curriculum was so frequently transcribed". N. G. Wilson mentions twenty-two extant *codices* of his works copied during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁹⁵ Modern editors try to

⁹¹ P. A. M. Leone (1991), ref. I.10, letter 106, on p. 169.

⁹² R. Hirzel, *Plutarchos* (Leipzig, 1912), p. 100.

⁹³ The account that follows of the editions of Plutarch by Planudes and his circle is based mainly on R. Flacelière (1993), ref. II.9; J. Irigoin and R. Flacelière (1987), ref. II.23; A. Garzya (and others, 1988), ref. II.11.

⁹⁴ E. B. Fryde, "The beginnings of Italian humanist historiography: the 'New Cicero' of Leonardo Bruni" in my *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), pp. 50–51.

⁹⁵ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, p. 151.

separate those early copies from the Planudean edition of 1294–96 and its descendants. They criticize Planudes for creating perplexing problems by his emendations. “For those who seek to recover the original text of Plutarch, the Planudean edition represents more an obstacle than an aid.”⁹⁶ But this overlooks the possibility that Planudes may have rescued some texts that might otherwise have been lost. Also, as A. Garzya has pointed out, not all his new readings were merely conjectures, and some, probably, derived from older manuscripts, now lost.⁹⁷

Although the Planudean edition has provoked these grumbles of modern scholars, it is in many ways an admirable achievement. The study of the modern editions of Plutarch’s *Moralia* increases one’s appreciation of the textual minefield that Planudes tried to traverse and we recognize that he repeatedly made a very good job of it.

We can reconstruct the successive stages of Planudes’ Plutarchian editions of both the *Lives* and the 69 *Moralia* known to him⁹⁸ (“all that I had found”, as he put it in his autograph fair copy of 1301).⁹⁹ Of the *Moralia* edited by him, at least eight may not be works of Plutarch.

Probably in the course of 1294–95 the first draft was compiled, copied by Planudes and nine collaborators (the Milanese ms. Ambrosianus C.126 inf.). As we still have the manuscript from which he derived the initial twenty-one *Moralia*, corrected and annotated by Planudes (ms. Mosquensis gr.352), his editorial methods can be studied best in these texts, and I have commented on this in section III of chapter 9. Where Planudes lacked a portion of the text, he noted the fact. Thus, in “The Platonic Questions”, copied by Planudes personally, he recorded that he “had not found the beginning”¹⁰⁰ (discovered only later in the fourteenth century). Each of the four remaining portions of the *Moralia* (nos. 22–34, 35–43, 44–50, 51–69), including the “Lives of the Emperors Galba and Otho” (nos. 25–26), were derived by Planudes from a different combination of sources.

In preparation for a fair copy Planudes carefully revised this first draft, which was then recopied by a single scribe as our Parisian

⁹⁶ Irigoin and Flacelière (1987), ref. II.23, p. CCLXXVI.

⁹⁷ A. Garzya (and others, 1988), ref. II.11, p. 27.

⁹⁸ They are listed in D. A. Russell (1972), ref. II.28, pp., 164–71.

⁹⁹ Irigoin and Flacelière (1987), ref. II.23, p. CCLXXIII.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. CCLXXVII.

(Bibl.Nat.) ms.gr.1671. Planudes kept it by him and continued to revise it. In 1301 he copied it himself (Venetian ms.Marcianus gr.481) and he also included an ancient list of Plutarch's works, probably a catalogue from some ancient library, usually called the "List of Lamprias", which contained many treatises not available to Planudes.¹⁰¹ His pupils continued to amplify this Plutarchian legacy. Thus, ms. Vat.gr.139, copied in the early fourteenth century from the initial draft of ms. Ambrosianus, included also the newly rediscovered nine books of *The Table Talk*. Lastly, a huge *codex* copied around the middle of the fourteenth century (ms.Parisinus gr.1672), besides incorporating this addition, added seven more items rediscovered after Planudes' time (not all authentic). The Planudean *codices* of Plutarch became parents of a huge family of manuscripts copied in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

IV

One of the special interests of Planudes, pursued by him over many years, was the assemblage of selections of Greek epigrams which we call the *Greek Anthology*.¹⁰² An important group within them, of exceptional freshness and formal perfection, were the Hellenistic epigrams. It was in this genre that some of the Hellenistic poets wrote their best lyric poetry and created their most accomplished masterpieces.¹⁰³ In his earliest known collection of hexametric poetry, ms.Laur.32.16, containing so much Hellenistic (Alexandrian) poetry, Planudes copied in his own hand a selection of epigrams. This was the first instalment of his quest, prelude to a greatly expanded collection put together by him about twenty years later, including many Hellenistic epigrams. The epigrams in ms.32.16, were derived from the "Garland of Meleager", the earliest component of the *Anthology*, dating from around the last decade of the 1st century B.C.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ A. Garzya (and others, 1988), ref. II.11, pp. 11–12.

¹⁰² This section is based chiefly on A. S. F. Gow (1958), ref. II.19; the publications of R. Aubreton and F. Buffière, ref.II, nos. 1–3; A. Cameron (1993), ref. II.7.

¹⁰³ R. Pfeiffer, "The future of studies in the field of Hellenistic poetry", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 75 (1955), p. 73; A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page (eds.), *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams*, I (Cambridge, 1965).

¹⁰⁴ A. Cameron, "The *Garlands* of Meleager and Philip", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 9 (1968), p. 323.

Because of the complexity of the modern literature on that “bewildering book” (A. S. F. Gow’s comment), it is desirable to trace the gradual formation of the selection. The final stage occurred in the first quarter of the tenth century, when an imperial official named Kephalas, of whom we have a record in 917, transliterated into minuscule an older *codex*, or possibly brought together several hitherto separate collections. The volume created by him is the ancestor of our surviving manuscripts of the *Greek Anthology*. None of them is complete. The Planudean selection, preserved in his autograph *codex*, the Venetian ms. Marcianus gr.481, completed in 1301, contains 388 epigrams that are missing elsewhere. He was careless in recording the names of the authors, which are available in some older manuscripts.¹⁰⁵ Presumably most of these ancient writers meant nothing to him, and he only wanted to have their poetry. This is in keeping with his profound ignorance of much ancient history (below, section VI).

Besides leaving out many epigrams which he considered morally offensive (above, section I), Planudes also emended some of the texts. Some of these emendations were probably his own conjectures, but they are often superior to corrupt readings in other manuscripts. Where he alone has true readings it is “very improbable that most are conjectures”.¹⁰⁶ Presumably Planudes was using superior older manuscripts.

Furthermore, he appears to have added some epigrams from a variety of sources quite unconnected with the tenth-century *Anthology* of Kephalas. One such admirable addition may be the moving epitaph on Constantina, daughter of the emperor Tiberius and wife of his successor Maurice, one of the most distinguished emperors, put to death with her husband and eight children by the usurper Phokas (after November 602). It is possible that he derived it from the historian Zonaras or another writer of the twelfth century.¹⁰⁷

Modern editions of the *Anthology* are based on much fuller collections which were rediscovered only in the seventeenth century, or even later. The Planudean selection is used in them merely as a supplementary source, where it offers superior readings, or contains epigrams uniquely preserved or added by Planudes.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹⁰⁶ A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page (eds.), *The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1968), p. LIII.

¹⁰⁷ A. Cameron (1993), ref. II.7, pp. 215–16.

To return to Planudes' own interest in the *Anthology*. He continued to be preoccupied with it for the rest of his life. A fair copy of the ms.Marcianus gr.481 was transcribed for him, which he then corrected in his own hand (British Library, ms.Addit.16.409). Subsequently, Planudes reorganized his collection in order to regroup epigrams on the same topics. A fair copy of this survives in ms.Parisinus gr. 2744, copied by a scribe who is known to have worked subsequently for his friend (perhaps former pupil), Demetrios Triklinios.

V

Various treatises of Planudes arising out of his teaching of rhetoric and grammar have been surveyed in chapter 11. But there is one work by him, on what might be called linguistic theory, so personal to him that it seems best to discuss it in this chapter, devoted to his most distinctive achievements.

This is his treatise on syntax, one of his most sophisticated writings. One of the best versions is in a collection of fifty grammatical writings in the Florentine ms.Laur.55.7 (above section III of chapter 11). It is there on fos.406–15, copied after 1314.¹⁰⁸

Such fragmentary glimpses as we might catch of the grammatical and linguistic studies of the Hellenistic pioneers of these disciplines we owe largely to their Byzantine successors, and especially to Planudes and his disciples and associates. We have now only a part of what was available to them and it is very difficult to be sure what any of them may have used.

In antiquity the study of Greek (and Latin) grammars was much influenced by Stoic philosophers. However, for the Stoics these studies were only an element in pursuit of wider philosophical inquiries. They formed part of their concern with the logic of truthful thought and discourse. This introduced peculiar limitations and distortions into grammatical studies. The Stoics had distinctive doctrines about the origin and nature of words. They were convinced that the meanings of words should represent the nature of the things denoted by them. Furthermore, the right use of words was essential to safeguard correct 'Hellenic' usage.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 375–80, 408–9.

¹⁰⁹ G. Murray, "The beginning of grammar or first attempts at a science of language in Greece" in his *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946); M. Frede, "Principles of Stoic

This preoccupation with individual words led to excessive concentration on the grammar of the different parts of speech, each studied in isolation from others, and a comparative neglect of the combined use of words in sentences. That meant that syntax had never been discussed adequately by the Stoics, or the ancient Greek grammarians who followed them.¹¹⁰

The work in four books on syntax by Apollonios Dyskolos, who was active at Alexandria in the second century A.D., was regarded later as the most authoritative.¹¹¹ Apollonios certainly did not intend to write a textbook. The length and style of his grammatical writings are much more reminiscent of research papers,¹¹² and notoriously difficult to understand.¹¹³ Priscian, writing at Constantinople in the sixth century A.D., was a more lucid and masterful scholar. While Planudes knew the writings of Apollonios, he was much more indebted to Priscian's Latin *Grammatical Institutions*.¹¹⁴ This was one of several benefits from Planudes' familiarity with Latin, so unusual among Byzantines.

Planudes provided the first really systematic exposition of Greek syntax in a single volume. One of the most interesting and pioneering features of it (though there are many others) is his discussion of what modern students of linguistics call the 'localist' usage of cases in declensions (four in Greek) with three different cases being used to indicate movement *to* or *from* a place or presence *in* a place.¹¹⁵ He adapted skilfully Priscian's discussion of the use of the more numerous Latin cases (six) to the smaller range of the Greek ones (four): while the Latin uses the ablative to convey presence in a place or movement away from it, the Greek, which lacks the ablative, uses the dative in the first instance and genitive in the second. Planudes also illustrated in detail the alternative possibilities of indicating location through prefacing nouns by appropriate prepositions (the

grammar" in J. M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics* (Berkeley, 1978); L. Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical...* (Paris, 1981), pp. 3-9.

¹¹⁰ D. Donnet, "La place de la syntaxe dans les traités de la grammaire grecque des origines au XII^e siècle", *L'Antiquité Classique*, 36 (1967), pp. 22-46; M. Frede, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford, 1987), no. 17, especially pp. 351-56.

¹¹¹ Ed. By G. Uhlig, *Apollonii Dyscoli "De Constructione" libri quattuor* (Leipzig, 1910).

¹¹² R. H. Robins (1993), ref. III.5, p. 29.

¹¹³ L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1974), p. 39.

¹¹⁴ R. H. Robins (1993), ref. III.5, pp. 209-11, 225-26.

¹¹⁵ My account of the 'localist' usage is based on works in section 3 of the bibliography to this chapter.

Greek equivalents of *to*, *from* and *in*), followed by the right case.

For Planudes all this was exclusively a matter for inquiry into correct linguistic usage freed from any connection with wider logical or philosophical problems. He went much further than Priscian in attempting to explain what cases should be used in each instance.¹¹⁶ He reads like a modern linguistic specialist.

"No-one would suggest that a localist theory sprang . . . from the head of Planudes." Earlier Greek grammarians had touched upon it, and so had Priscian. "But it received its first recorded, explicit presentation at the hands of Planudes".¹¹⁷ He is the first scholar to use the verb *theorein* ("to examine theoretically") in this discussion of the correct usage of locative cases.¹¹⁸ Planudes was attempting to provide a general explanation of linguistic phenomena and "to find ways to illustrate and explain the underlying principles of grammar".¹¹⁹

Planudes did not translate Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticales* into Greek. But he did translate the second best thing, the much shorter Latin *Ars Minor* of Aelius Donatus, the leading grammarian at Rome in the middle of the fourth century A.D. The treatise translated by Planudes was the shorter and more elementary of the two grammars composed by Donatus, distinguished by its clarity and judicious selection of materials. In the Latin West it remained for centuries the standard textbook.¹²⁰

VI

Several manuscripts containing his miscellaneous writings were either assembled by Planudes (or are copies of such collections), or else were put together by people who had access to his surviving papers. They provide further evidence about his interests. Some of those manuscripts contain collections of his excerpts from various authors (the Planudean *Collectanea*), but they share some of their contents with other miscellaneous *codices* and it is best to look at them all together.

¹¹⁶ R. H. Robins (1993), ref. III.5, pp. 225–26.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹¹⁸ F. Murru (1979), ref. III.2a, pp. 122–23 and n. 8 on p. 123.

¹¹⁹ R. Webb in *Dialogos*, 1 (1994), pp. 94–95.

¹²⁰ R. Browning in *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, II, *Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 767–68.

The letters of Planudes are scattered through those miscellaneous *codices*. Scholars and other educated notables assembled selections of letters which they wished to circulate among their contemporaries. The 121 letters of Planudes most probably formed such a selection made by him.¹²¹ They include letters to Andronikos II and to various notables, dating mostly after 1290–92.¹²² The original *codex* containing his selection is lost, but almost all the known letters seem to descend from it.¹²³ They are to be found mostly in manuscripts copied after his death.¹²⁴

Aubrey Diller was convinced that the Florentine ms.Laur.59.30 was Planudes' master-copy of his so-called *Collectanea*.¹²⁵ It is a collection of excerpts mainly from geographical, historical, philosophical and religious writers.¹²⁶ I can only discuss here a selection of important texts (some unique), as well as a few unusual ones. S. Kougéas has suggested that it was assembled for use in teaching¹²⁷ and this may offer a partial explanation. There are, for example, selections from Plato's dialogues though Planudes had full texts of them in ms.Par.gr.1808 (above, section II of chapter 10). The source from which the excerpts are derived suggest to me a relatively early stage of Planudes' scholarly activities.

K. Wendel, without offering any evidence, has rejected Diller's assumption,¹²⁸ accepted by me after careful inspection of ms.Laur.59.30, that this was the source of all the other copies (in at least 6 mss). The only undoubtedly Planudean section (fos. 1–103), though not his autograph, is written in a hand sufficiently close to his handwriting to suggest that it might have been written by one of his collaborators. The rest of ms.59.30 does not seem to have formed part of the original *Collectanea*. However, the second section, though written in a different hand (fos. 104–159) does contain materials connected with Planudes. The last part (fos. 160 seq.) was added much later.

¹²¹ I am using the recent edition of P. A. M. Leone (1991), ref. I.10, which supersedes the edition by M. Treu (Breslau, 1890).

¹²² Leone, *ibid.*, p. xxii.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹²⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, p. 336.

¹²⁵ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, p. 343.

¹²⁶ The remainder of my account of the Planudean *Collectanea* is based chiefly on the sources listed in section IV of the bibliography to this chapter. The contents of the *Collectanea* are listed, and partly edited, in E. Piccolomini (1874), ref. IV.8.

¹²⁷ S. Kougéas (1909), ref. I.7, p. 145.

¹²⁸ K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, col. 2232.

A list of contents on the initial flyleaf shows that the *Collectanea* originally started with, a now missing, selection of excerpts from the two books of Aelian's *De Varia Historia*. He was, along with Philostratos, one of the protégés of the empress Iulia Domna (c. 200 A.D.) and his work was an assortment of marvellous stories, partly dealing with animals, and not a serious scientific work.¹²⁹ The next two collections of excerpts from Strabo and Pausanias have been discussed separately in section III. They are followed on fos. 30v–47v by 335 historical excerpts mainly about Roman history.¹³⁰ The significant feature of his choices is that his excerpts are predominantly derived from Byzantine compilations or Byzantine historians rather than from ancient Greek writers on Roman history.

The first 44 excerpts certainly derive mostly from a chronicle by John of Antioch (from the creation of the world to 610 A.D.). They add to our meagre body of known citations from this chronicler of the seventh century. Admittedly John wrote well and he did use a wide range of Roman and early Byzantine sources.¹³¹ Planudean citations from him stretch from the traditional foundation of Rome in the middle of the eighth century B.C. to the last decades before the end of the Roman Republic, though they may have been eked out from some other Byzantine sources (see below).¹³²

The passages in this first batch of excerpts were derived by John chiefly from a work of late antiquity, the Latin *Breviarium* of Eutropius (c. 369 A.D.), through one of its translations into Greek.¹³³ This was a respectable factual source, but not a work from which one could seek a profound understanding of Roman history. Eutropius was, admittedly a clear and attractive writer. After a career in the central imperial administration he rose to being a senator at Constantinople and a consul. His summary of Roman history was produced for the emperor Valens, a soldier of scant education. It was intended to provide essential information about Roman history for that emperor and for the new elite of notables of the Eastern part of the Empire, largely strangers to the traditions of the Latin past.¹³⁴ Eutropius lacked

¹²⁹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, vol. I, pp. 297–98, 320.

¹³⁰ The fullest discussion is in S. Kougéas (1909), ref. I.7, pp. 126–46.

¹³¹ See on him H. Hunger, vol. I, pp. 326–28 and F. R. Walton (1965), ref. IV.14.

¹³² They are edited in U. P. Boissevain (1955 reprint), ref. IV.2, vol. I, pp. cxiv–xxii. Latin translation in A. Mai (1827), ref. IV.6, pp. 527–51.

¹³³ There are good accounts by W. den Boer (1968), ref. IV.4; N. Scivoletto, ref. IV.9; H. W. Bird (1993), ref. IV.1.

¹³⁴ Scivoletto (1970), *ibid.*, pp. 14–30.

any wider historical conceptions and he produced a factual record that does not explain much about the causes of events. But he cites numerous incidents, which convey his admiration for the humane conduct of some military commanders and emperors. Planudes cited a few of these civilized comments, ultimately derived by John of Antioch from Eutropius.¹³⁵ But Planudes' main interest seems to have lain in examples of the ancient Roman virtues: unquestioning patriotism, courage, strict discipline and heroic self-sacrifice. Some examples were obviously miraculous and mythical, but this does not seem to have mattered to Planudes. Others were based on real incidents, but suitably slanted by Livy or Plutarch.

Excerpt no. 5 reveals Planudes' interest in comparing Latin and Greek institutions: he cites Greek equivalents for Roman officials and practices (including tribune, dictator, praetor, censor).¹³⁶ Excerpt 38, copied from John of Antioch, which that chronicler had derived from Plutarch's "Life of Sulla", perhaps gives us a significant glimpse of what Planudes particularly valued. It speaks of Sulla's capture of Athens and his original intention of destroying it, followed by his concession to spare Athens because of the honourable deeds of the earlier Athenians.¹³⁷

The bulk of the remaining historical excerpts, covering chiefly the period of the Roman Empire, were derived by Planudes from an *Epitome* of a "Roman History" (down to 229 A.D.) by a Greek former consul, Dio Cassius.¹³⁸ That *Epitome* was compiled in the 1070's by John Xiphilinos, nephew of a patriarch of Constantinople of that name. It was derived from Dio's narrative after 68 B.C.¹³⁹

On fo. 35r of ms.59.30 Planudes cites an autobiographical remark of Xiphilinos, recording that he had written the *Epitome* of Dio at the request of the emperor Michael Dukas (1071-78).¹⁴⁰ In one passage Xiphilinos explained that his purpose was to "tell in detail all that we need to remember to this very day, given that our own life and political system to a very large extent depend on those times".¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, Xiphilinos had no serious grasp of a historian's task,

¹³⁵ U. P. Boissevain (1955), ref. IV.2, vol. I, excerpts 32, 35, 44 (pp. cxx-xxiii), Scivoletto, *ibid.*, pp. 39, 43 (the same incidents).

¹³⁶ Boissevain, *ibid.*, p. cxv.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. cxxi-xxii.

¹³⁸ Edited *ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 479-730.

¹³⁹ F. Millar (1964), ref. IV.7, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁰ E. Piccolomini (1874), ref. IV.8, pp. 111.

¹⁴¹ P. A. Brunt (1980), ref. IV.3, p. 489.

nor an understanding of Roman history. His *Epitome* is "a rather erratic selection" providing "only a spasmodic and often barely intelligible narrative".¹⁴² He was specially addicted to citing interesting anecdotes. His main merit lies in many *verbatim* citations of Dio's own words.¹⁴³

Dio was also one of the principal sources for the Roman history of Zonaras, a much more intelligent historian than Xiphilinos (above, chapter 3, section VI). Planudes may have used Zonaras (e.g. excerpt 24)¹⁴⁴ and it is puzzling why he chose to copy the materials provided by Dio from the *Epitome* of Xiphilinos rather than directly from Zonaras.

A small number of historical excerpts is of uncertain provenance. Some were probably derived by Planudes from a verse chronicle from the creation of the world to 1081 by Constantine Manasses, written about 1150. During the next two decades he was a secretary of the emperor Manuel and died around 1187 as archbishop of Naupaktos. The Greek version of his verse-chronicle is lost. Hence what are probably the Planudean excerpts from it are valuable for its text. Manasses was a prolific writer. His historical work was produced for entertainment and not as a piece of serious scholarship.¹⁴⁵

Planudes evidently liked Manasses, because fos. 48r–50v of ms. Laur.59.30 contain also some 70 excerpts from his lost metrical romance, full of classical mythological lore. Manasses probably was also the source of a collection of riddles on the same folios.¹⁴⁶ These materials are followed on fos. 50v–52v by 27 excerpts from the letters of Synesios of Cyrene (c. 370–413 A.D.), one of the writers most cherished by Byzantines (to be discussed in section IV of chapter 16).

The connection of the remaining portions of ms.59.30 with Planudes is more questionable (after fo. 104), but two collections of popular proverbs and riddles (142v–146r) are expressly attributed to him,¹⁴⁷ adding to similar texts that he copied from Manasses.

¹⁴² F. Millar (1964), ref. IV.7, p. 2.

¹⁴³ For the deficiencies of Xiphilinos see *ibid.*, pp. 195–203 and P. A. Brunt (1980), ref. IV.3, pp. 488–92.

¹⁴⁴ U. P. Boissevain (1955), ref. IV.2, vol. I, pp. cxix, 307.

¹⁴⁵ R. Browning (1977), no. XVI in ref. IV.4, pp. 26–7; H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.6, vol. I, pp. 419–22 and vol. II, p. 114.

¹⁴⁶ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, p. 345. They were edited by F. Piccolomini (1874), ref. IV.8, pp. 150–60.

¹⁴⁷ K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.15, col. 2239; H. G. Beck, *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (München, 1971), p. 206.

The earliest surviving Byzantine collection of such popular literature dates from the mid-twelfth century and was assembled by Michael Glykas a versatile writer and a former secretary of Manuel I.¹⁴⁸ The relation of the Planudean collection of proverbs to his predecessors still awaits detailed study. It does reveal an attractive glimpse of his interest in ordinary life and in the humbler members of the Byzantine population.

To return to the first, Planudean part of ms.59.30. One of the most valuable selections of excerpts in it came from a treatise "On the Months" by John Lydos (fos. 52v–59r) which provides much information about the pagan Roman calendar and festivities.¹⁴⁹ It is not extant in full and the Planudean excerpts are an important source for our reconstruction of it.¹⁵⁰

John entered the imperial service at Constantinople in 511 and the treatise here discussed was probably written around 543.¹⁵¹ He was a Christian, but like many of his learned contemporaries, he looked back with nostalgia to the glories of the pagan Roman past. After his retirement in 551 he became professor (? of Latin) at the imperial university at Constantinople and he cites in his writings a long array of authors on Roman 'antiquities'.

VII

In the eyes of Byzantine scholars Greek scientific writings formed as vital a part of their heritage from antiquity as did ancient literary works (chapter 17). This was certainly so for Planudes, whose edition of Ptolemy's *Guide to Geography* was one of his greatest scholarly achievements, while his editions of ancient mathematicians, especially Diophantos, offer the clearest proof of his exceptional mental powers (chapter 17, section II).

One of his earliest scientific enterprises may have been the edition of two astronomical works, surviving in his autograph manuscript

¹⁴⁸ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.6, vol. I, p. 423; R. Beaton, *The Medieval Greek Romances* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 92.

¹⁴⁹ M. Maas (1992), ref. IV.5, chapter 4: "*De Mensibus* and the antiquarian tradition".

¹⁵⁰ A. Diller (1983), ref. II.3, pp. 299–300.

¹⁵¹ There is an excellent account of his career in E. Stein (1949), ref. IV.10, vol. II, pp. 729–34, 838–40. The latest monograph is by M. Maas (1992), ref. IV.5.

(National Library of Scotland, Advocates' 18.7.15).¹⁵² The first item in it is the *Theory of the Revolutions of Heavenly Bodies* (fos. 1–54), by Cleomedes, probably active in the first century A.D.¹⁵³ A note on its last page mentions an eclipse of the moon on 21–22 August 1290. The second item (fos. 55–126) is the astronomical poem by Aratos, the *Phaenomena*, a literary rather than a scientific work. Planudes tried to correct some of its more glaring scientific errors by replacing the offending text with his own verses (*supra*, chapter 9, section III). He also added a number of other texts related to this poem.¹⁵⁴

We owe to Cleomedes the information about the attempts of his predecessors, Eratosthenes of Alexandria and Poseidonios of Rhodes, to devise methods of measuring the size of the earth.¹⁵⁵ Planudes also came to know, and included in his selection of epigrams (the *Greek Anthology*), an epigram that is generally accepted as written by Ptolemy:

I know that I am mortal, a creature of a day, but when I search into the multitudinous spirals of the stars, my feet no longer rest on earth, but standing by Zeus, himself, I take my fill of ambrosia, the food of the gods.¹⁵⁶

This is an astonishing testimony to Ptolemy's pride in his scientific achievements. These may have been some of the incentives to Planudes for seeking to rediscover manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Geography*, finally crowned with success around 1295–96.

Apart from Strabo's mainly descriptive and historical *Geography*, Ptolemy's treatise, in 8 books, is the second largest geographical work surviving from antiquity and was apparently his last major publication, crowning a lifetime of research.¹⁵⁷ He wrote at Alexandria and his probable dates were *c.* 100–*c.* 178 A.D. His title of *The Guide to Geography* implied that a description of individual countries was not intended. Instead he was trying to fix as precisely as possible the location of the more important localities in the inhabited part of the

¹⁵² I am citing the Cunningham (1970), see chapter 8, ref. III.5.

¹⁵³ S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of the Greeks* (London, paperback edition, 1987), pp. 74, 138.

¹⁵⁴ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.5, II, p. 417.

¹⁵⁵ G. Aujac (1993), ref. V.4, p. 128, n. 12.

¹⁵⁶ F. Boll, "Das Epigram des Claudius Ptolemäus", in his *Kleine Schriften zur Sternkunde des Altertums* (Leipzig, 1950), pp. 145–46.

¹⁵⁷ For information about this treatise see section V of the references to this chapter.

globe known to him. This formed the first step to inserting them correctly on the maps that were to accompany his text. In order to provide the necessary information he had to estimate correctly their longitude (a difficult task) as well as their latitude. He was probably the first scientist to do this systematically.

While the bulk of the treatise consists of lists of inhabited places with their coordinates of latitude and longitude, there are also brief descriptions of the chief topographical features of the larger land areas. Ptolemy's work is, of course, very uneven. He was no traveller himself and depended on descriptions provided by others. At least for the territories of the Roman Empire he is usually, though not always, a valuable source. The information about Africa beyond the northern coastal regions and about most of Asia, though containing some valuable details, is largely fanciful and springs mainly from Ptolemy's preconceived ideas.¹⁵⁸

Ptolemy's most sophisticated achievement was his devising of appropriate map projections. "For the first time a mathematically clear theory of geographical mapping was presented".¹⁵⁹ In book 1 he explained that, as maps were easily corrupted in copying, he was providing information that would enable a skilled reader to reconstruct good scientific maps from his text. He also described there how to draw a single map of the whole inhabited world. Book 8 describes the methods for the drawing of 26 individual maps of smaller areas, using a much simpler projection. For the map of the whole known world he discussed two alternative projection systems, his most brilliant intellectual achievement. Here, above all, "he took a giant step in the science of map-making".¹⁶⁰ In the long run "in its theoretical as well as practical consequences it far exceeded in importance" his astronomical writings¹⁶¹ (for which see chapter 17).

O. Neugebauer justifiably denounced much of the enormous literature on the Ptolemaic *Geography* as marred by "a remarkable ignorance of elementary astronomy, ancient as well as modern".¹⁶² Confusions about the nature and origin of the key manuscripts has

¹⁵⁸ See especially, the justifiably critical comments of G. Aujac (1993), ref. V.4, pp. 116, 126.

¹⁵⁹ O. Neugebauer (1975), ref. V.8b, p. 934.

¹⁶⁰ G. J. Toomer (1975), ref. V.10, pp. 198–200.

¹⁶¹ O. Neugebauer (1975), ref. V.8b, p. 934.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 935 and n. 7.

added to a forest of misconceptions, producing misguided controversies about the history of the maps. This has been cleared up by the remarkable publications of A. Diller.¹⁶³ Germaine Aujac's latest book sums up judiciously what appear to be right conclusions, assigning a decisive role in the recovery of good texts to Planudes (with freshly reconstructed maps).¹⁶⁴

There is convincing evidence that Ptolemy included maps of the individual provinces of the Roman Empire (probably 26), as well as the single map of the known inhabited world. Apart from his own statements about his whole work being a prelude to the designing of such maps, we have an early Byzantine summary of some of the features of his *Guide to Geography* which clearly presuppose the existence of those maps. Mme. W. Conus-Wolska seems right to attribute this *Diagnosis* to a traveller and geographic writer of the mid-sixth century A.D., usually referred to as Cosmas Indicopleustes. The version of the text he was using is closely related to the most important textual family of Ptolemy's treatise, used by Planudes for his new edition of it.¹⁶⁵

It is also now quite clear that the ancient maps were lost after late antiquity.¹⁶⁶ Planudes rediscovered texts without maps. The *Geography* may have been known to isolated, earlier Byzantine scholars (e.g. John Tzetzes in the twelfth century),¹⁶⁷ but the rediscovery by Planudes of good texts inaugurated its re-entry into wider circulation.

In one of the poems celebrating his discovery Planudes stated that he himself reconstructed a missing map.¹⁶⁸ N. G. Wilson has suggested that it "may have been a single map of the world",¹⁶⁹ involving a particularly sophisticated system of projection. What we know of Planudes' editions of mathematical works (chapter 17), confirms that he would have been fully capable of such a feat. Andronikos II was so impressed that he caused Planudes to make a copy for him, equipped with a full set of reconstructed maps. This is most probably the very elegant ms.Vat.Urbinas gr.82, while the copy executed for Planudes personally may be the Constantinople ms.Seragl.57.

¹⁶³ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, nos. 12, 15.

¹⁶⁴ G. Aujac (1993), ref. V.4, pp. 166–68.

¹⁶⁵ W. Conus-Wolska (1973), ref. V.5.

¹⁶⁶ L. O. T. Tudeer (1917), ref. V.10.

¹⁶⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, p. 234.

¹⁶⁸ S. Kougéas (1909), ref. I.7, pp. 115–18.

¹⁶⁹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.15, p. 234.

Both were written by the copyist of ms.Par.gr.1393 of Strabo's *Geography*, probably written for Planudes (above, section III).¹⁷⁰

Planudes also owned another *codex* of Ptolemy, ms.Vat.gr.177, without maps, and representing a second textual tradition.¹⁷¹ But the greatest future awaited ms.Vat.Urbinas gr.82. It has the best set of maps: 10 of Europe, 4 of Libya (Africa) and 12 of Asia, as well as a single map of the world.¹⁷² In 1397 it was brought to Florence by Manuel Chrysoloras, who inaugurated the teaching of scholarly Greek in Italy. It became the ancestor of the Italian *codices* of Ptolemy, and soon after, a Latin translation.¹⁷³

VIII

Planudes translations of select Latin works into Greek widen our appreciation of his outlook and values.¹⁷⁴ But they also make us more fully aware of the complex nature of his personality and of the dangers of over-simplifying his priorities.

His delight in literary variety and in distinguished writing is confirmed by his choices of works that merited translation. Some had high spiritual quality, like Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* ("Dream of Scipio"), with the "Commentary" on it by Macrobius, and the *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius, but it is possible that Planudes was also attracted by the literary artistry of Cicero and Boethius. Both these works are presented as phantasies and Planudes' translation of Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses* shows that he delighted in literary artifice. He clearly loved Ovid. His gradual translation of much of Ovid's poetry, over many years (see below), reveals a lighter and satirical side of his outlook as does the rendering of some, at least, of Juvenal's Satires, referred to in a note to his version of Boethius, but lost to us.¹⁷⁵

To return to the more weighty philosophical works.¹⁷⁶ *Somnium*

¹⁷⁰ A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, no. 12, pp. 99–100.

¹⁷¹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, p. 234.

¹⁷² A. Diller (1983), ref. I.3, pp. 101–2.

¹⁷³ G. Aujac (1993), ref. V.4, pp. 168, 173–74.

¹⁷⁴ This is stressed by M. Gigante (1981), ref. VI.3.

¹⁷⁵ S. Kougéas, "Maximus Planudes und Juvenal", *Philologus*, 73 (1914), pp. 318–19.

¹⁷⁶ The account that follows is based on sources listed in section VI of the references to this chapter.

Scipionis formed the last (6th) book of Cicero's *De Re Publica*, which he was writing in 54 B.C. "The title is really untranslatable and means something like 'On State and Society'."¹⁷⁷ Only the "Dream of Scipio" is completely preserved in a separate textual tradition. The whole dialogue was one of the most important writings of Cicero, designed to extol the special virtues of the constitution of the Roman state. The myth of the "Dream of Scipio" was a replica of the "Myth of Er" concluding Plato's *Republic*. It centred on the evocation of statesmen and generals of the second century B.C., regarded by Cicero as the greatest age of the Roman republic. The 'dreamer' was P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus (189–129 B.C.), the conqueror of Carthage in 146. He was 'conversing' with his dead father, conqueror of Macedonia in 168 and his dead adoptive grandfather, the elder Scipio Africanus (d. 183) who had brought to a victorious close the second war with Carthage (in 202–1). Its message was identical with the rest of the dialogue, about the over-riding importance of a life devoted to the service to one's state, based on military triumphs, but also on justice and the virtuous treatment of one's fellow citizens. In his 'dream' the younger Scipio is told that such conduct will ensure an eternal life of bliss in a divine Heaven.

In the "Dream" Scipio is given a lesson in Greek cosmology, a combination of the teaching of Plato and Aristotle,¹⁷⁸ as a background to stressing the brief transience and insignificance of human life, including his own. It is one of the most poetic 'visions' in Roman literature and one of the most superb pieces of ancient Latin prose.¹⁷⁹

Macrobius was probably identical with he who was the prefect of Rome in 430 A.D. and his "Commentary" on the "Dream of Scipio" may have been written soon afterwards.¹⁸⁰ He was a pagan, but there is nothing explicitly anti-Christian in his lengthy "Commentary", greatly exceeding the "Dream".

The "Dream", and the Macrobian "Commentary" on it, contained much that was sure to appeal to Planudes. Their message, of the

¹⁷⁷ E. Rawson (1975), ref. VI.10b, pp. 148, 153.

¹⁷⁸ Notable discussions of Cicero's sources are in P. Boyancé. *Études sur le Songe de Scipion* (Bordeaux, 1936), and in A. D. Leeman, "De Aristotelis Protreptico, Somnii Scipionis Exemplo", *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 11 (1958). A detailed survey is in K. Büchner (1976), ref. VI.1.

¹⁷⁹ Büchner, *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁰ A. Cameron, "The date and identity of Macrobius", *Journal of Roman Studies*, 56 (1966), pp. 25–38.

omnipotence of the supreme God, the immortality of human souls and the condemnation of suicide, was welcome to Christians. The stress on the love of justice and the supreme ideal of devoting one's life to the service of one's state would be congenial to a friend of Andronikos II. Planudes was bound to admire Cicero's debt to Plato. A Ciceronian quotation from Plato's *Phaedrus* was not translated by Planudes, but was cited by him directly from Plato's Greek text (above, chapter 9, section III). In the "Commentary" of Macrobius Plato is the most frequently cited Greek philosopher. Macrobius is summarizing Neoplatonic doctrines, using chiefly Porphyry, but also, in some places, citing directly Porphyry's teacher, Plotinus.¹⁸¹

The Planudean version of Boethius can be dated fairly precisely from his letters, to some time before 1296.¹⁸² Boethius (c. 480–524/5) was a very distinguished Roman senator, executed by the Gothic king, Theodoric, on suspicion (probably unjustified) of conspiring with the Byzantine government. The *Consolation of Philosophy*, his last work, was composed by him from memory, while awaiting execution. The setting of the dialogue is mythical, as the 'Philosophy' who argues with him in prison, is a beautiful woman (? a goddess).¹⁸³

It is one of the very few Latin literary masterpieces surviving from late antiquity. "Its simple and Ciceronian style is well-nigh a miracle." Boethius was recollecting in enforced tranquility "his philosophical concerns and his assessment of their validity". He was summing up the chief lessons of ancient philosophy, especially of Plato and the Stoics. Planudes would appreciate the debt to Plato and the Neoplatonists.

As a record of what a very distinguished and learned man sought to cling to in the face of imminent death, it is one of the most moving and noble texts of the European heritage. Boethius was a Christian, but there is nothing here to indicate that. One of its chief messages is that "*independently of any revelation* (my italics), the mind can achieve certainty about the existence of God, his goodness and his power of ruling the universe". One way of thinking about Boethius in the final days of his life is summed up by Peter Brown:

¹⁸¹ See the table of probable sources suggested by different scholars in W. H. Stahl (1990), ref. VI.11, pp. 34–35.

¹⁸² K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, col. 2241.

¹⁸³ In what follows I am citing my "Manuscript of the writings of Boethius belonging to Lupus of Ferrières (? c. 829–c. 836)" in *Essays and Poems presented to Daniel Huws* (eds. Tegwyn Jones and E. B. Fryde, Aberystwyth, 1994), pp. 268–69, 282.

he still puzzles us by the tranquility with which a staunchly Christian Roman aristocrat . . . could reach back for comfort, in the face of death, to the pre-Christian wisdom of the ancients.¹⁸⁴

And his worship of eternal Rome is as devout as that of Cicero in "The Dream of Scipio".

Another translation by Planudes of a work with a high moral message was his version of the so-called *Disticha Catonis*. It had no real connexion with the Stoic Roman statesman, who killed himself in 46 B.C. after a defeat by Caesar in the civil war. Its anonymous compiler wrote in late antiquity.¹⁸⁵

This author recommended, among other things, the poetry of Ovid, and Planudes translated, mostly in prose, a selection of Ovid's poems. Latin originals would have been easy to find as Ovid was one of the most popular Latin poets in the Western Europe of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁸⁶

There are controversies about how much of Ovid's poetry was translated by Planudes. E. J. Keaney has argued that he did translate the amatory poems, but I share N. G. Wilson's doubts about this.¹⁸⁷ It is certain that he translated some of Ovid's best poetry, the *Heroides* (mythological love-epistles) and his largest creation, the *Metamorphoses*, comprising 250 separate stories.

The Planudean versions of Ovid suggest a gradual improvement in his translating method of rendering poetry in prose.¹⁸⁸ This would point to a continuity of his fascination with Ovid over an extended period. Planudes was presumably attracted by echoes of Hellenistic poetry such as that he had collected in ms.Laur.32.16. The storehouse of mythological information found in Nonnos, copied there, was amplified by Ovid's poetry, especially the *Metamorphoses*. There was, besides, Ovid's brilliant artistry, his lightness of touch, the skill and speed of his narratives, the abounding wit, irony and touches of satire. Planudes may also have been attracted by deeper qualities, the often good-natured sense of humour, the glimpses of psychological

¹⁸⁴ P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity. From Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad* (London, 1971), p. 132.

¹⁸⁵ R. Browning in *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, II, *Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 695–96.

¹⁸⁶ M. Gigante (1981), ref. VI.3, no. V, pp. 97–98.

¹⁸⁷ E. J. Keaney (1963), ref. VI.4 and N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.16, pp. 230–31.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* (1983), pp. 220–22.

perceptiveness.¹⁸⁹ "When all is said and done" Ovid's "own humanity comes through".¹⁹⁰

Except for Boethius,¹⁹¹ the Planudean translations are of no importance for the textual tradition of the works rendered by him. Recent studies of the best manuscripts of his versions have rehabilitated the usually high quality of his translations, especially where citations from the Greek, or Greek proper names, lay behind the Latin texts.¹⁹² To judge by the large number of surviving manuscripts, his version of Boethius was the most popular.¹⁹³ One of the most scholarly Byzantines active in the middle of the fourteenth century produced for himself a learned critique of a part of the Planudean version of the "Commentary" of Macrobius on the "Dream of Scipio". The repeated diplomatic missions of Nicholas Sigeros (d. c. 1357) to Italy and the Avignon popes perfected his knowledge of Latin and led to a friendship with Petrarch.¹⁹⁴ His autograph copy of the Planudean text is on fos. 59–74 of his *codex* now at München (ms. Monacensis gr.439).¹⁹⁵ His notes, based on a comparison with the Latin original, are on fos. 59–64. He recorded alternative readings and noted omissions by Planudes,¹⁹⁶ whom he named as the translator ("the lord Maximos").¹⁹⁷ He was as assured and scholarly as Planudes himself.

IX

In the last years of the reign of Michael VIII (d. December 1282) Planudes was enlisted as one of the supporters of the Union with the Latin church (above, chapter 6). His most important contribution was the translation of St. Augustine's *De Trinitate* ("On the Trinity", 15 books). This was one of Augustine's masterpieces (414 A.D.).¹⁹⁸

¹⁸⁹ See especially J. Barsby, *Ovid* (Oxford, 1978).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38, citing B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1970).

¹⁹¹ A. Pertusi (1951), ref. VI.7, p. 305.

¹⁹² M. Gigante (1981), ref. VI.3, nos. V and VI; A. Pavano (1992), ref. VI.6. See also Keaney (1963), ref. VI.4, p. 219, though he also draws attention to mistakes and occasional misunderstandings of Latin.

¹⁹³ Pertusi (1951), ref. VI.7, pp. 306–8.

¹⁹⁴ A. Pertusi, *Leonzio Pilato tra Petrarca e Boccaccio* . . . (Venice, 1964), appendix 1 to chapter 1, pp. 43–62.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–60.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ See the account of it in H. I. Marrou (1938), ref. VII.3, pp. 63–5, 315–27, 368–76, 458–59; see also P. Brown (1967), ref. VII.1, pp. 270–80, 282 [on the date].

He describes it as a difficult work, likely to be understood only by very few readers¹⁹⁹ and its translation was an impressive achievement. The fundamental division between the Western and the Eastern churches, that the Council of Lyons tried in vain to heal in 1274, turned basically on divergent conceptions of the nature of the Trinity. The Western conception derived above all from St. Augustine²⁰⁰ and Planudes was making the essential choice in translating the Augustinian "On the Trinity".

Planudes also wrote a treatise in favour of the Union of the two churches, now lost. After the Union had been abandoned as soon as Andronikos II succeeded Michael VIII, Planudes changed sides and wrote two treatises against the Latins. Demetrios Kydones (c. 1323–1398), the Byzantine statesman who favoured reconciliation with the Latin West, and owned a copy of the Planudean translation of "On the Trinity",²⁰¹ thought that Planudes was inspired by the fear of persecution by the anti-Union zealots.²⁰² But one should also allow for Planudes' friendship with Andronikos II, who was committed to the anti-Union policies. In later years Planudes appears to have avoided religious controversies.

On 21 May 1295 Andronikos II recognized as his co-emperor his eldest son, Michael IX. Planudes was invited to deliver an oration in praise of the two emperors, testifying to the high regard for him at the imperial court.²⁰³ It resembled other panegyrics delivered on such occasions. However, two religious details deserve comment. Planudes praised Andronikos for ending religious controversies. This was, of course, a discreet reference to the ending of all advocacy of the Union of Eastern and Western churches. The tradition of imperial panegyrics did allow suggestions about imperial policies. Planudes invited the young Michael IX to become a successful military commander, who would repel the enemies surrounding the empire. Contrary to the normal traditions of the Byzantine church, which

¹⁹⁹ M. Rackl (1924), ref. VII.4, p. 17.

²⁰⁰ J. Meyendorff, "Theology in the thirteenth century: methodological contrasts" in *Kathegetria. Essays Presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th birthday* (Camberley, 1988), pp. 401–2.

²⁰¹ R. Devresse (ed.), *Codices Vaticani Graeci*, III, mss. 604–866 (Città del Vaticano, 1950), ms. 606, pp. 10–11, 13.

²⁰² V. Laurent (1933), ref. VII.2, coll. 2249–50.

²⁰³ L. G. Westerink (1966), ref. I.15.

deplored warfare, Planudes asserted that pacifism was not enjoined by the Bible and that common sense dictated the need for armed defence.²⁰⁴ He sounded very different from his contemporary, and fellow ecclesiastic, George Pachymeres (1242–c. 1310) who in his “History” remarked that war is “sweet to those who know it not”.²⁰⁵

A number of manuscripts, though written after the death of Planudes, were clearly assembled by friends or disciples who had access to his papers. They preserve good texts, probably copied from his autographs, of a number of his miscellaneous writings.

The Florentine ms. Laur. 56.22 appears to be one of them. It starts with one of the few extant near-complete sets of his letters (121). There follows a sermon on the “Burial of Our Lord, Jesus Christ”, apparently delivered at the imperial court on a Good Friday.²⁰⁶ Next comes a homily in praise of St. Peter and St. Paul, which probably dates from the pro-Unionist phase of Planudes (before 1283). It appears to have been modelled on the famous oration of Aristides (2nd century A.D.) in praise of Athens. On fos. 177–86 is a rhetorical essay “In praise of winter” that must have been written before 1295.²⁰⁷ The manuscript ends with the Planudean translations of the *Disticha Catonis* and of Boethius.

On fos. 153–176 is a hagiographic piece that might fittingly end this account of Planudes. St. Diomedes (d. c. 300 A.D.) was the martyred patron saint of Nicomedia, the birthplace of Planudes in north-western Asia Minor. His panegyric on St. Diomedes was modelled on the funeral oration of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, early in 390 A.D., on his friend, St. Basil, the creator of the Byzantine “Monastic Rule”. But the “Life” also included the miraculous features of the traditions about St. Diomedes. Planudes perhaps wrote it because his mother, who had become a nun in her old age, was a passionate devotee of that saint.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

²⁰⁵ G. G. Arnakis, “George Pachymeres—a Byzantine humanist”, *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 12 (1966–67), p. 165.

²⁰⁶ V. Laurent (1933), ref. VII.2, col. 2250.

²⁰⁷ K. Wendel (1950), ref. I.14, col. 2210.

²⁰⁸ L. G. Westerink (1966), ref. VII.6.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEMETRIOS TRIKLINIOS

I

Thessalonica was, alongside Constantinople, the other main centre of the classical Renaissance (above, section II of chapter 9). Its scholars made, indeed, a more crucial contribution to the preservation of the great Athenian dramatists of the fifth century B.C. than did Planudes and other scholars active at the Byzantine capital. Our gratitude for this must go, above all to Demetrios Triklinios, a native of Thessalonica and a teacher there during much of his career.

Like Planudes, Triklinios tried to collate as many manuscripts of the ancient Greek authors as he could find. While his editions of poets and dramatists arose out of his teaching, the immense care that he devoted to his editions went “beyond the immediate needs of a school-reading list”.¹ He was the one Palaeologan scholar who tried to produce *complete* editions of the extant tragedies of the Athenian dramatists and of the surviving poems of Pindar and Theokritos. Unlike his contemporaries, who were satisfied with commenting on the school-selection of three comedies of Aristophanes, Triklinios edited eight. The three surviving ones which he did not include were probably unknown to him as they were very rare.²

In his editions he scrupulously indicated by a cross, and often also by an explicit note (‘ours’), his own conjectures. But he freely admitted that he was using information (including *scholia*) derived from older manuscripts, as well as from commentaries of scholars who were his contemporaries.³ In dealing with older collections of *scholia* he eliminated a large proportion of the more ancient ones, for much of this material was apt to have no relevance to the texts annotated by him.

¹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251. Wilson’s account of the editorial enterprises of Triklinios (*ibid.*, pp. 249–56) provides the best introduction to him.

² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

³ E. Fränkel (1950), I, ref. III.4, pp. 3–4 and plate I (following p. 195); R. Aubreton (1949), ref. I.1, p. 51 and n. 1.

Instead, he inserted numerous translations of ancient Greek words which had gone out of use and were unintelligible to Byzantine readers.⁴

Thomas Magistros, who claimed to be the real originator of the classical revival at Thessalonica (below, chapter 14), may have been one of his teachers. Planudes may have been another. Both men were certainly cited by him with great respect. Compared with Planudes, he was a more limited scholar in his range of interests and, as N. G. Wilson has remarked he "does not seem to have appreciated how remarkable Planudes was".⁵

Triklinios did not devote much time to prose writers. There is no evidence that he shared Planudes' expertise in Latin or that, like Planudes, he wrote original treatises on Greek linguistic usage (except on poetic metres). Triklinios was, however, interested in the collections of his contemporaries on Attic vocabularies and one of his manuscripts contains a copy of the treatise of Thomas Magistros on Attic usage.⁶ He was also interested in scientific researches cultivated by Planudes. His notes can be found in astronomical and geographical *codices* copied, or at least annotated, by Planudes. But, unlike Planudes, he wrote very little on scientific subjects.⁷

The bulk of his editorial enterprises should be placed in the first third of the fourteenth century.⁸ Many scholars have attempted to reconstruct the exact chronology of his editorial activities, but much of this research remains inconclusive, except that his editions of poets, especially Pindar and Theokritos, appear to have come relatively early, perhaps preceding his editions of the Athenian dramatists.⁹ We must remember that, like Planudes, he kept revising his texts after discovering new manuscripts. Furthermore, while he was a pioneer in systematically emending his texts by applying ancient learning on metres, his ideas evolved as he discovered new ancient authorities. The likelihood is that he had successive editions of several different authors in preparation at the same time. I have therefore chosen to

⁴ E. B. Fryde, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (1996), I, p. 372.

⁵ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 249.

⁶ O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, p. 188 and n. 5.

⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, pp. 249–50; A. Wasserstein (1967), ref. I.6.

⁸ O. L. Smith (1975), ref. III.9, p. 4. His earliest known autograph *codex*, containing a collection of texts for the teaching of rhetoric, dates from 1308 (Oxford, New.Coll.ms. 258) Cf. R. Barbour, *Greek Literary Hands, A.D. 400–1600* (Oxford, 1981), no. 94, on p. 26.

⁹ O. L. Smith (1975), *ibid.*, p. 45.

discuss his editorial activities in chronological order of the writers he edited.

One of the most attractive features of Triklinios' scholarship is his scrupulous honesty. He indicated his use of 'old' *codices* and recorded his changes of mind. He acknowledged carefully the textual versions of his predecessors, which he had taken over, added appreciative comments about the achievements of his contemporaries, as well as indicating the innovations introduced by himself.

II

Many modern scholars have commented harshly on Triklinios' shortcomings as an editor of classical texts. They have often treated him as if he were a contemporary scholar, instead of being an astonishingly enterprising pioneer. While one must rehearse the criticisms of some of his methods, his immense achievements vastly compensate for his failings.

Modern classical scholars have often been exasperated by what seem to be his conjectural emendations, complicating the quest for the recovery of versions nearer to ancient originals. Thus, Eduard Fränkel, in his monumental edition of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, commenting on an early Triklinian version, not affected as yet by his editorial 'improvements', commended it for being "at least free from the particularly reckless, though often ingenious conjectures of Triclinius".¹⁰

As I stressed in chapter 8, some of the alleged conjectures may have been derived from older manuscripts, since lost, and may have included variants of great antiquity. As far as the *Agamemnon* is concerned, we owe it to Triklinios alone that, instead of meagre fragments we have an almost complete text of what is, perhaps, the most powerful of all the ancient Greek tragedies.¹¹ Besides, the texts of Aeschylean tragedies are notoriously corrupt and have continued to baffle modern scholars.¹² Triklinios showed admirable courage and enterprise in trying to edit Aeschylus.

The classical editions of Triklinios incorporated several main groups

¹⁰ E. Fränkel (1950), ref. III.4, vol. I, p. 33.

¹¹ H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.), *Aeschylus, Oresteia* (2nd ed., London, 1979), p. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. viii giving references to some passages which must be emended.

of textual innovations. He included the results of the collations of his basic texts with older manuscripts rediscovered by him. G. Zuntz has listed, for example, a number of such improvements in his editions of Euripides.¹³ His own conjectural emendations fell into three groups. Firstly there were emendations of what he regarded as faulty grammar. Profound familiarity with the Athenian tragedies of the fifth century B.C. also gave him a remarkable grasp of tragic diction, superior to that of his Byzantine predecessors and contemporaries.¹⁴ Many of the resultant corrections emended obviously corrupt passages and often they have been accepted by modern editors.

The third group of emendations is more questionable. Triklinios was justifiably unhappy about the inability of earlier Byzantine editors to understand the metres of ancient Greek poetry and was determined to put this right. Of course, a correct restoration of what the metre of a passage seems to demand is one of possible devices for recovering the right readings in texts corrupted by previous copyists. Unfortunately Triklinios did not realize that his understanding of these complex technical problems was likewise inadequate. His emendations of poetic and dramatic texts in order to make them conform to what he believed to be the correct metrical rules is the chief reason for his disrepute among many modern classicists.

Some of his metrical emendations can be found relatively early in his career.¹⁵ He acquired what he regarded (wrongly) as satisfactory expertise only gradually as he rediscovered new ancient authorities and put misguided trust in them. The application of his fully-evolved doctrines about metres must be dated to the years after 1320–22.¹⁶

A glance at the treatment of ancient Greek poetry in antiquity is necessary here. No special way of writing poetry, as distinct from prose, can be traced before the second-century B.C. Alexandrian scholars, especially Aristophanes of Byzantium (c. 258/55–180 B.C.), introduced division into separate verses, both in entirely poetic works and in choruses and other lyrical passages of dramas. Rules were also formulated for the metres regarded as appropriate for different kinds of poetry.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Triklinios had little access to the

¹³ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.13, pp. 198–99.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 280–1; O. L. Smith (1975), ref. III.8, p. 3.

¹⁵ J. Irigoin (1979), review of O. L. Smith, ref. III.8, p. 59.

¹⁶ O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, pp. 201–3.

¹⁷ There is an excellent account of the 'metric' scholarship of the Hellenistic,

origins of this scholarship and followed, instead, later manuals of 'metric' learning. He was influenced chiefly by dogmatic and partly misinformed writings by Hephaestion (2nd century A.D.). The original work of Hephaestion, in 48 books, had disappeared in late antiquity and only an epitome was available to Triklinios. We still have in the Venetian ms. Marcianus gr.483 (of *c.* 1320) a collection of texts on metres written by Nicholas Triklinios, a kinsman of Demetrios, and annotated by the latter. It contains some twelve items, of which Hephaestion's "metrical handbook" is the most important.¹⁸ Later in his career he rediscovered fragments of 'metric' *scholia* to comedies of Aristophanes added by Heliodoros (*c.* 100 A.D.). Heliodoros was a more cautious scholar than Hephaestion and knowledge of these fragments further modified Triklinios' metrical assumptions.¹⁹ But Heliodoros, too, was an imperfect guide and his critical ability was much inferior to that of the great Alexandrian pioneers of the third and second centuries B.C. In any case, Triklinios did not properly understand Heliodoros who

was too advanced for him . . . but it is only fair to make allowances for the difficulties caused by the inadequate nature of much of the information that his sources offered him.²⁰

Most of the dismay of modern scholars at Triklinian 'emendations' spring from his attempts at systematic 'regularizing' of the poetic metres, particularly in the choruses of the plays edited by him. This dismay is excellently summed up by G. Zuntz, who speaks of

the ruthless manner in which he tried to enforce metrical correspondence in lyric passages, and indeed his dealings with these indicate insensitivity and lack of imagination.

Furthermore, Zuntz recorded "that more often than not his interference ruined sound verses or failed to heal faulty ones".²¹

Alexandrian scholars in R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 171–209.

¹⁸ Henze in *Paul's R.E.*, VIII, 1 (1912), "Hephaestion", no. 7, coll. 296–309; J. W. White (1914), ref. V.11, p. XLVIII. For ms. Marcianus gr.483 see N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 253 and O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, p. 202.

¹⁹ Wilson (*ibid.*), pp. 252–53; J. W. White (1912), ref. I.7, pp. 385–93; J. Irigoin (1979), review of O. L. Smith, ref. III.9, p. 59 and J. Irigoin (1995), introduction to ref. III.6, p. xi.

²⁰ Wilson (*ibid.*), p. 253.

²¹ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.9, pp. 194, 197.

Manchester ms. Rylands 1689 appears to be a fourteenth-century copy of an early edition by Triklinios of some plays of Euripides. A recent analysis by J. Diggle of the *Orestes* in it discusses nine Triklinian emendations for "metrical reasons". At least two were very bad conjectures, one of which led Triklinios into an appalling emendation.²²

There were multiple reasons for the deficiencies of Triklinios' metrical learning. Enough has already been said about his following of unsatisfactory, late ancient writers, like Hephaestion or of his imperfect understanding of Heliodoros. Not surprisingly, he failed to realize that some of the texts he was trying to improve were too corrupt²³ to allow credible emendations based on dogmatic 'metrical' rules. Furthermore, after the sixth century A.D., all Byzantine scholars were familiar only with a type of verse radically different from ancient Greek poetry. While in antiquity verse was based on varieties of quantitative rhythms (combinations of long and short syllables varying in different metres), this became unfamiliar to Byzantines as the pronunciation of the Greek language altered. Their poetry became based on the stress in the pronunciation of individual words. Triklinios might have thought that he could recapture the ancient 'metric', but he had "no means of reading, reciting or hearing [ancient Greek] poetry as it actually sounded",²⁴ any more than we do now.

Lastly neither Hephaestion nor Triklinios had any adequate understanding of the evolution of metres in ancient Greek poetry and, especially in the Athenian drama. The Athenian dramatists used a rich variety of metres in a very sophisticated manner, and modern scholars have been able to rediscover all this only very gradually.²⁵ A pedantic scholar like Hephaestion, trying to formulate a 'metrical' system, could not understand this, nor could Triklinios who strove to follow him.

²² J. Diggle (1991), ref. IV.3, pp. 99–101.

²³ G. Murray in *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 93–95; E. G. Turner, "L'érudition alexandrine et les papyrus", *Chronique d'Égypte*, 37 (1962), pp. 142–43.

²⁴ P. Maas (1962), ref. I.4, pp. 3–5, 13–14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10; J. Irigoin (1958), ref. II.4, p. 50.

III

The poems of Hesiod (8th century B.C.) edited previously by Planudes (section II of chapter 12), and partly also by Moschopulos, were re-edited, with emendations, by Triklinios. We have his autograph *codex* containing this edition, copied gradually between 1316 and 1319, when he was at the height of his scholarly expertise (Venetian ms. Marcianus gr.464).²⁶ A slightly earlier text of Hesiod's *Works and Days* is in the Florentine ms. Laur. 32.2, copied for Triklinios.²⁷

Ms. Marcianus gr.464 is the most beautiful of all the identifiable Triklinian autographs.²⁸ He tried to assemble all the materials connected with Hesiod, including all the earlier collections of ancient and Byzantine *scholia*, and also works we now regard as later imitations of Hesiod, though Triklinios shared the Byzantine belief in their authenticity (the "Shield of Heracles"). The text of the *Works and Days* was based almost completely on an earlier edition by Moschopulos, though Triklinios introduced a few emendations.²⁹ With his customary honesty he acknowledged that the commentary on fos. 46v–78r was by Moschopulos. Beside the earlier commentaries of Proclus (5th century A.D.) and Tzetzes (12th century), also reproduced by Triklinios, this Moschopulean commentary "seems a model of common sense in comparison. He limits himself to a humble paraphrase with brief notes, mainly grammatical".³⁰ This Triklinian edition of the *Works and Days* produced a large progeny. In 1974 M. L. West knew at least 19 fourteenth-century *codices* that contained it.³¹

The Triklinian edition of the much rarer *Theogony* appears to have been based on a combination of sources, "Where the text available to him was unmetrical, or seemed to him to be unmetrical", Triklinios "emended, sometimes successfully sometimes less so".³² In his *scholia* he was "responsible for substantial additions, with citations from Byzantine writers".³³

²⁶ There is a detailed description of this manuscript in G. Derenzini (1979), ref. II.1. See also A. Turyn (1972), ref. III.24 in chapter 8, vol. I, pp. 123–27 and vol. II, plates 96–100.

²⁷ Bandini, *Cat.gr.*, II, col. 124.

²⁸ M. L. West (1964), ref. II.6, p. 173; G. Derenzini (1979), ref. II.1, p. 238.

²⁹ M. L. West (1974), ref. II.7, pp. 174–76; M. L. West (1978), ref. II.35 in chapter 12, p. 83.

³⁰ West, *ibid.* (1978), p. 70.

³¹ West (1974), ref. II.7, pp. 174–75.

³² West (1964), ref. II.6, p. 181.

³³ West (1966), ref. II.34 in chapter 12, p. 70.

Triklinios was interested in the poems of Pindar (522 or 518–442 or 438 B.C.) during much of his career and edited the four collections of Pindaric Odes which alone were preserved in his time. These collections were assembled by Alexandrian scholars (most probably Aristophanes of Byzantium), who grouped in them the poems celebrating athletic victories in the four Panhellenic contests (Olympian, Isthmian, Nemean, Pythian).³⁴ There survive 45 complete poems. The ones which can be dated, range between 498 and 446 B.C.³⁵ They reveal an evolution from an optimistic young Pindar to a very disillusioned old man, crushingly aware of the uncertain fortunes of human beings.³⁶

Pindar was one of the greatest Greek poets, though this is obscured by the difficulty of translating him and the allusions to beliefs and myths fully intelligible only to a small elite of his contemporaries.³⁷ He was deeply religious in a traditional way. His poetic technique was masterly and varied: "no extant complete poem is built on precisely the same metrical plan as any other".³⁸ That was sure to fascinate Triklinios. Pindar was steeped in Greek mythological traditions, both the ones universally familiar and the more localized ones. He appears to have visited most of the Greek lands. Though his native Thebes supported the Persians in 480–79 B.C., Pindar remained very appreciative of Athens, where as a young man he had studied music, and he wrote some of his best poems for patrons on Aegina whose ships had made a valiant contribution to the victory over the Persians at Salamis, in 479 B.C.³⁹ His outlook was conservative, as was true of the patrons for whom he wrote. His praise of success and bold endeavour must have appealed to the aristocratic and courtly elite for whom the Palaeologan scholars were providing their editions of his Odes. However, now and then, there are passages that preclude dismissing him as a mere aristocratic traditionalist. He was willing, when appropriate to celebrate liberation from tyrants.⁴⁰

³⁴ R. Lattimore, *The Odes of Pindar* (Chicago and London, 1947), p. vii.

³⁵ J. H. Finley (1955), ref. II.2, p. 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–39.

³⁷ This comment and the rest of this paragraph owe most to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones (1990), ref. II.5, but also much to Moses I. Finley in *The Ancient Greeks* (revised Pelican ed., 1971), pp. 97–9 and in *Aspects of Antiquity* (Pelican ed., 1972), pp. 43–47.

³⁸ M. I. Finley, *ibid.*, (1972), p. 44.

³⁹ J. H. Finley (1955), ref. II.2, pp. 3–4, 29–32.

⁴⁰ E.g. W. S. Barrett, "Pindar's Twelfth Olympian and the fall of the Deinomenidai", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 93 (1973), pp. 23–35.

Some of his comments on the human condition make his appeal to us as timeless as that of his great tragic contemporary, Aeschylus.

All our texts of Pindar seem to go back to a single (?Alexandrian) archetype and not very corrupt.⁴¹ There seem to have been at least three transliterations into minuscule⁴² and our Thoman and Triklinian editions were established through comparison of several *codices*. The text of the Triklinian version of Pindar was based, as he acknowledged,⁴³ on earlier editions by Thomas Magistros and Manuel Moschopoulos (discussed further in chapter 14). In the final version of his Pindaric edition Triklinios prefaced each Ode by an introductory note on its metres and in many of the poems he added marginal *scholia* analysing the metre of each line.⁴⁴ The Florentine ms.Laur.32.52, of perhaps c. 1320, is the fullest surviving *codex* of Pindar and is a Triklinian manuscript. Ms.Laur.Conv.Soppr.94 is somewhat later and less complete, with notes in his hand. Beside ample grammatical and literary commentaries taken over from Thomas Magistros, it contains a few explanatory notes added by Triklinios. Its texts contains many textual adjustments based on his notions of what should be correct metre.⁴⁵ Triklinios

occasionally made an unsuccessful attempt to improve the meaning of a difficult passage . . . Pindar was too difficult an author for Triklinios to make much impression on the problems of text and interpretation.⁴⁶

IV

Triklinios made a major contribution to our texts of Aeschylus, Euripides and Aristophanes. His edition of Sophocles, though influential in Renaissance Europe was the least original of his editorial enterprises and I shall leave a brief mention of it to the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

⁴¹ A. Turyn (ed.), *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis* (Oxford, 1952), p. v; D. E. Gerber, "Emendations in the Odes of Pindar" in *Pindare, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique*, 31 (1984), p. 26.

⁴² J. Irigoin (1952) ref. II.3, p. 24ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 202-3.

⁴⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251; the metrical scholia to each line are edited by J. Irigoin (1958), ref. II.4, pp. 131-77.

⁴⁵ Irigoin (1952), ref. II.3, pp. 321-30 and II.4 (1958), pp. 80-81, 94, 165-6; M. Wittek in *Scriptorium*, 8 (1955), p. 332-33.

⁴⁶ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251; see also Irigoin, ref. II.3 and II.4, *passim*.

Aeschylus (c. 525–456/55 B.C.) is the earliest Greek dramatist whose plays survive: the extant ones (seven) were performed between 472 and 458.⁴⁷ The first of these, the *Persians*, was unusual in being based not on an ancient myth but on the drama of the Persian invasion of Greece in 480–79 B.C. It is set in the Persian royal court and its tragedy arises out of the megalomaniac ambition of King Xerxes. Aeschylus had fought in the Athenian victories against the Persians at Marathon (490) and Salamis (480), and this makes his humane portrayal of the tragedy of the other Persians, trying in vain to avert disasters, all the more moving. His very late three plays, the Oresteian cycle of 458, include his greatest tragedy, the *Agamemnon*.⁴⁸ All his plays are dominated by the vindication of the justice of Zeus, the supreme god, who inevitably, sooner or later, punished human crimes, though it is the humans themselves who were the unwitting executors of his condemnation, with other gods as partisan agents. The operation of the justice of Zeus could not be fully understood by mankind, but ultimately had to be endured. However, another message keeps reappearing, of Aeschylus' respect for the potential in human beings of achieving moderation and civilized progress. Though his extant plays (except the *Persians*) subtly adapt Homer and other Greek myths, he is distrustful of their unquestioning acceptance of the heroic glory of warriors. The chorus in the *Agamemnon* spells out the futility of the Trojan Wars that made inevitable the tragedy of that play and its two sequels.⁴⁹ These brief comments can do scant justice to the subtlety and complexity of Aeschylus, "a sublime poet and brilliant dramatist", an author of passages of "gorgeous dignity".⁵⁰

The rediscovery of the virtually complete text of the *Agamemnon* must have been the most exciting moment in Triklinios' studies of Aeschylus, and may have constituted one of the principal motives for producing a new complete edition of his extant plays. The excitement of new textual discoveries will similarly pervade his editions of Euripides (below, section V).

⁴⁷ For the main facts (rather meagre) of his career see P. Mazon (1984), ref. II.7, pp. I–V.

⁴⁸ There is an immense literature on Aeschylus' outlook and the significance of his plays (cf. section III of the references to this chapter). I have found particularly valuable E. Fränkel's edition of the *Agamemnon* (1950), ref. III.4; H. D. F. Kitto (1952), ref. III.5; J. H. Finley (1961), ref. III.3; H. Lloyd-Jones

⁴⁹ G. Murray (1955), ref. IV.9, p. 86; L. Golden, "Zeus, whoever he is . . .", *Translations and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 92 (1961), p. 157.

⁵⁰ J. H. Finley (1966), ref. III.3, pp. 35–47; E. Fränkel (1950), ref. III.4, vol. I, pp. 93–107 (the initial chorus).

The *scholia* inserted by Triklinios in his successive editions of Aeschylus tell us something about what most interested him and his collaborators. There are comments on grammatical and other linguistic matters. There are occasional cross-references to other Athenian dramas, like the probably Triklinian note to the *Prometheus Bound* in ms.Vat.gr.1824, referring to the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, not a drama in the school-selection of his plays and hardly known before the Triklinian editions of Sophocles.⁵¹ Such notes confirm his familiarity with all the Greek tragedies available to him.

Should one try to speculate further about the appeal of Aeschylus to Triklinios, one may venture to speak of the probable fascination with the mastery of Greek language and with the abundance of rare and archaic words.⁵² The Triklinian scholarly circle was steeped in Homer: in Aeschylus there was often a startlingly original combination of Homer and his own, more 'modern' innovations.⁵³ But the religious outlook of Aeschylus and the deeper significance of his plays is unlikely to have aroused any understanding.

We have only seven complete (or almost complete) tragedies of Aeschylus. They derive from two different manuscripts, though both go back ultimately to the same archetype. The Florentine ms.Laur.32.9, brought to Italy in 1423 and preserved ever since at Florence, is the only fairly complete *codex* which once contained all seven dramas.⁵⁴ It is doubtful whether it was known to Triklinios or had any Byzantine progeny. The *Suppliants* (an early play) and the second drama of the Oresteian trilogy of 458, the *Libation Bearers* (*Choephoroe*) are only preserved in that manuscript and were unknown to Triklinios. The text of the *Agamemnon* in it is very damaged and now lacks lines 311–1066 and 1160–1673 (end).⁵⁵ We owe it to Triklinios that he restored to a wider circulation an almost complete version of it, recovered from some different *codex*.

That manuscript was a descendant of a *codex*, transliterated possibly in the ninth or tenth century, containing the remaining five tragedies.⁵⁶ These were the triad used in the Byzantine schools (the

⁵¹ O. L. Smith (1970), ref. III.8, pp. 16–17.

⁵² H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.), *Aeschylus, Oresteia* (2nd ed., London, 1979), p. vi.

⁵³ P. E. Easterling, "Notes on tragedy and epic" in L. Rodley (ed.), *Colloquium on Greek Drama in Honour of R. P. Winnington-Ingram* (London, 1987), p. 55.

⁵⁴ Bandini, *Cat.gr.*, II, col. 133.

⁵⁵ E. Fränkel (1950), ref. III.4, I, p. 2.

⁵⁶ J. Denniston and D. Page (ed.), *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford, 1957), p. xxxvii; P. Mazon (1984), ref. III.7, vol. I, p. xxiii.

Persians, the *Seven Against Thebes*, the *Prometheus Bound*) and the two remaining dramas of the Oresteian trilogy (the first and the third), edited in a number of successive recensions by Triklinios (the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*).

The earliest editions by Triklinios of Aeschylus were limited to the three selected plays used in the schools. He re-edited texts and used commentaries of other contemporary Byzantine scholars. His first edition of these three plays, supplemented by the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*, dates from around 1320 and is preserved most fully in the Florentine ms. Laur. 31.8.⁵⁷ His final edition, which is different, because it incorporates the full range of his 'metric' emendations, with 'metric' and other *scholia*, may have been as late as 1330 and is certainly an autograph of Triklinios (Neapolitan ms. II. F. 31). The texts of the two *Oresteian* plays are as full as we are ever likely to have them, the *Agamemnon* almost complete, the *Eumenides*, with two gaps (lines 582–644, 778–807).⁵⁸

V

In the range of his imagination, inventiveness, fantasy and variety of his dramatic plots, Euripides (484/80–406 B.C.) surpassed all contemporary Athenian dramatists.⁵⁹ His first drama was apparently performed in 455 B.C.⁶⁰ and he continued to write until the end of his life. He was one of the greatest poets of all time. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle considered him "the most tragic of the poets", in part, at least, "because his characters seem somehow lost intellectually," though they are intelligent and vocal enough.⁶¹ Several of his most poignant plays are tragedies of people who know what should be their right conduct, but do the opposite, out of weakness, some fault of character, or, above all, out of uncontrollable irrational passions⁶² (the *Medea*, the *Hippolytus* and the *Bacchae*). In the first of these three (431 B.C.), Medea has killed her children for a confusion of reasons

⁵⁷ J. Irigoin (1979), review of O. L. Smith, ref. III.8, p. 58; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 253; O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, pp. 198–201.

⁵⁸ E. Fränkel (1950), ref. III.4, vol. I, pp. 3–4. For the probable date see Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 253.

⁵⁹ See section IV of the references to this chapter.

⁶⁰ R. Lattimore (1958), ref. IV.8, p. 103.

⁶¹ G. Murray (1955), ref. IV.9, p. 86; J. H. Finley (1966), ref. III.3, p. 108.

⁶² Finley, *ibid.*, pp. 62–66.

and “in the end she does not know why she kills them”.⁶³ In the *Hippolytus* of 428 B.C., Phaedra, brooding “on why life goes wrong” says that it is

not through the nature of human mind . . . since many people are intelligent, but because we do not do the things that we know we should, being distracted by idleness, pleasure, talk, the bright bane of leisure and by . . . the bad form of self-respect, which seems to be an excessive regard for appearances.⁶⁴

The Palaeologan scholars must have found him exceptionally baffling in content and N. G. Wilson may be right in stressing that Triklinios, who rediscovered almost half of the known plays of Euripides, did not show any “deep understanding” of his texts.⁶⁵ The Byzantine scholars must have appreciated him as “a treasure-house” of Attic style. But their conception of how rhetoric should shape commendable writing may have militated against proper appreciation of the exceptional clarity of Euripides.

Triklinios’ “most notable accomplishment in his dealings with tragedy was the edition of the [nine] ‘alphabetic’ plays of Euripides that had remained practically unknown to previous generations of Byzantine scholars”.⁶⁶ Archbishop Eustathios of Thessalonica appears to have known them in the second half of the twelfth century,⁶⁷ but it was Triklinios who first gave them wide circulation. The excitement of that rediscovery sufficed to make his efforts to produce a complete edition of the nineteen plays accessible to him, and to us, one of the main tasks of his scholarly career.

In his attitude to the traditional Greek gods Euripides may have been more acceptable to the Byzantine Christian scholars than were either Aeschylus or Sophocles. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf remarked in 1904, that Euripides did not believe in the Greek gods “as his fellow citizens did”.⁶⁸ The other two dramatists were demonstrably nearer in their beliefs to contemporary Athenians. Unlike them, Euripides had doubts about much of traditional Greek religion, the belief in the oracle of Delphi, the inherited curse on some

⁶³ R. Lattimore (1958), ref. IV.8, p. 106.

⁶⁴ J. H. Finley (1966), ref. III.3, p. 63.

⁶⁵ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 255.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁶⁷ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.12, pp. 184–85.

⁶⁸ Cited in W. M. Calder, “Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf: *Sospirator Euripidis*”, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 27 (1980), pp. 420–21.

of the Greek royal dynasties (subjects of many of his dramas) or the myths about the divine birth of some of his heroes (e.g., Herakles). He manipulated the traditional myths much more audaciously than did his predecessors. In papyrus fragments of a lost play (unknown to the Byzantines), we even find its hero, Bellerophon, declaring that there are no gods in the heavens. He discovers the opposite, but it would have been inconceivable for Aeschylus or Sophocles to have uttered such statements.⁶⁹

Unlike Sophocles, who never brought into his dramas the feuds between different gods, these form the dominant feature of several Euripidean tragedies. In a tragedy rediscovered by Triklinios, Ion denounces evil acts committed by the gods with impunity, which would be accounted grave crimes if humans were guilty of them.⁷⁰ The gods are often shown by Euripides as cruel vindictive, jealous, petty, lacking any conscience, which can only be found in men and women.

However, it would be a mistake to attribute to Euripides excessively radical or unprecedented opinions on religious matters.⁷¹ Some of his greatest tragedies, like the *Bacchae*, are a testimony to his belief in supernatural forces beyond human control, and echoes of the same reverence for things beyond mere human reality are found in some earlier dramas. As Euripides has been convincingly shown to have been aware of much of the 'rational' teaching of contemporary philosophers and sophists, it was important that E. R. Dodds should have drawn attention to the 'devout' side of his outlook.⁷² The Byzantines would not, however, have been interested in reflecting on his religious beliefs.

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle attributed to Sophocles the comment "that he made men as they ought to be or as one ought to make them, but Euripides made man as they are".⁷³ There is much truth in this, for Euripides was the subtlest of students of human passions and their effects in distorting or silencing reason. It is impossible to say whether this created some sympathetic understanding of his dramas in the minds of his Byzantine editors.

⁶⁹ F. Chapoutier (1952), ref. IV.3, p. 214.

⁷⁰ F. Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1975), p. 75.

⁷¹ Cf. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Comedy, Hellenistic Literature, Greek Religion and Miscellanea* (Oxford, 1990), p. 388.

⁷² Cf. the fascinating introduction to this edition of the *Bacchae*, ref. IV.7 (1986). See also Dodds in ref. IV.5 (1951) and ref. IV.6 (1985 ed.).

⁷³ Cited in R. Lattimore (1958), ref. IV.8, p. 105.

Triklinios included in his Euripidean editions two versions of the "Life" of Euripides. One was composed by Thomas Magistros, probably his teacher, and was based on ancient lives present in some manuscripts. The other consisted virtually of the biography in the Byzantine encyclopedia known as the *Suda* (second half of the tenth century A.D.) and had been reproduced by Moschopoulos. Neither provided information of any importance for the understanding of his dramas.

Triklinios no doubt appreciated the familiarity of Euripides with dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. One of the two "Lives" of Euripides which he included in his editions ended with some comments on his dramatic techniques, including the beauty of his choruses and the skill of his dialogues.⁷⁴ Presumably Triklinios appreciated these things.

Some puzzling issues are raised by the Triklinian ending of one of the plays rediscovered by him, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, left unfinished by Euripides. It was performed soon afterwards in a production arranged by his son. We do not know what ending was added by him or used in later performances in antiquity.⁷⁵

Two versions of the myth of Iphigenia were known in antiquity. The more common story was that the Greek expedition against Troy could not sail because the goddess Artemis, wrathful against its leader, King Agamemnon, had raised persistent storms, and her anger could only be propitiated by the sacrificial killing of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. This sacrifice was carried out. Ten years later, Klytemnestra, the girl's mother, to avenge her death, killed Agamemnon on his return from Troy. That murder was, in turn, avenged by their children, incited by his sister, Electra. In this version the myth was used by Aeschylus in a cycle of three plays (the *Oresteia*) and there are also tragedies of *Electra* by Sophocles and Euripides. The Euripidean *Iphigenia in Aulis* may have originally ended with the girl departing for her sacrifice. However, a variant myth was current where Iphigenia was not killed but was miraculously removed by the goddess Artemis.⁷⁶ Euripides himself used this variant in another play, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, also rediscovered by Triklinios. An

⁷⁴ L. Méridier (ed.), *Euripide* (Paris, Budé coll.), I (8th ed., 1976), p. 5.

⁷⁵ G. Murray in the preface to the English translation by F. M. Stawell, *Iphigenia in Aulis* (London, 1929) and Stawell's own introduction; F. Jouan (ed.), *Euripide* (Paris, Budé ser.), VII, pt. I, *Iphigénie à Aulis* (1993), pp. 24–28.

⁷⁶ Jouan, *ibid.*, pp. 9–10 and n. 2 on p. 10.

ending based on this alternative myth appears in the Triklinian edition of the *Iphigenia in Aulis* in a copy of it originating in the Triklinian scholarly circle (Vat.ms.Pal.gr. 287). In that manuscript this added ending is written in a different hand from the preceding text on a separate leaf of parchment added to it. The hand is that of John Katrares, who was one of Triklinios' collaborators. It was probably based on a much earlier text and it would be unsafe to attribute its composition to Katrares.⁷⁷ But this might be cited as an incident pointing to a special interest in the textual tradition of Euripidean tragedies among some associates of Triklinios.

In producing a number of successive editions of Euripides, Triklinios had three main elements at his disposal. Firstly, there were ten plays 'selected' by some scholars in late antiquity, of which three were the commonly used school texts (the *Hecuba*, the *Orestes*, the *Phoenician Women*).⁷⁸ Some of the other seven became 'selected' gradually (the *Rhesos*, considerably altered, and the *Trojan Women* probably a late, additional 'selection').⁷⁹ Many of these plays were accompanied by ancient *scholia*. The *Bacchae*, one of the latest, and most perturbing, of the Euripidean tragedies,⁸⁰ though one of the 'selected' plays, only survives in the Triklinian editions.⁸¹

Secondly, there were nine plays, survivors of an ancient edition, without *scholia*, arranged alphabetically, probably a product of a separate commercial venture. Triklinios rediscovered these before 1317⁸² and was the first to give them wider circulation (the *Helena*, the *Electra*, the *Heracles*, the *Children of Heracles*, the *Suppliants*, the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the *Ion*, the *Cyclops*). The *Electra*, the two *Iphigeneian* dramas and the *Ion* are among the most fascinating of his plays.

Lastly there survived ancient 'hypotheses' to a number of Athenian dramas. They interested Triklinios. The ones to Euripides formed a particularly distinctive series.⁸³ The most scholarly were composed

⁷⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, pp. 255–56.

⁷⁸ See below, chapter 14, on the pre-Triklinian editions of this 'triad' by Triklinios' contemporaries.

⁷⁹ A. Tuilier (1968), ref. IV.10, pp. 270–71.

⁸⁰ See especially the edition of E. R. Dodds, ref. IV.7 and R. Lattimore (1958), ref. IV.8, chapter VI.

⁸¹ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.13, p. 110.

⁸² O. L. Smith (1975), ref. III.8, p. 44.

⁸³ Useful discussions in G. Zuntz (1963), ref. IV.12, pp. 129–46 and in his later book (1965), ref. IV.13, pp. 140–44.

by Aristophanes of Byzantium (librarian of the royal library at Alexandria from c. 247 B.C.). He wrote "simple and correct introductions" to individual plays. "They treated the subject-matter of the play . . . touching on the treatment of the same theme by other dramatists". They gave information about its first staging and provided "a critical judgement".⁸⁴ His comments were notably terse and to the point. Of the *Suppliants* he remarked, quite justifiably, that it was intended "in praise of Athens".⁸⁵ Triklinios took over four of his 'hypotheses' (to the *Alcestis*, the *Medea*, the *Rhesos* and the *Suppliants*).⁸⁶

'Hypotheses' of another sort were summaries of the Euripidean plays produced, perhaps, in the second century A.D., forming a separate collection, intended as a substitute for complete texts. These formed a second component of the ten 'hypotheses' edited by Triklinios (four of the 'selected' and six of the alphabetic plays).⁸⁷

Triklinios may have edited, very early in his career, the triad of the Euripidean school-plays.⁸⁸ His fairly complete edition of Euripides, made by 1317, is preserved in the Florentine ms.Laur.32.2 (ms.L). This is a paper *codex*, written by a number of scribes and annotated by Triklinios, a manuscript written "by scholars for scholars".⁸⁹ It also contains six plays of Sophocles (*infra*, appendix). It was, perhaps, once fuller: detached portions of it may now be bound into the Parisian ms.gr.2722 (the poems of Theokritos).⁹⁰ It is wisest not to speculate what portions of Euripides (if any) it might have lost. Today the *Bacchae* is copied in ms.32.2 only down to line 755 and the *Trojan Women* is missing, though Triklinios was able to include the almost complete *Bacchae* and the *Trojan Women* in his second, virtually complete, edition of the surviving Euripidean plays (ms.P, discussed below).

At least in the case of the *Bacchae*, the Triklinian text is inferior to the portions preserved on fragments of papyri.⁹¹ If the versions

⁸⁴ R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 192–94.

⁸⁵ G. Zuntz (1963), ref. IV.12, p. 131 and n. 1.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, and Pfeiffer, *op. cit.* (1971), p. 193, n. 4; Bandini, *Cat.gr.*, II, col. 124 (*argumenta*).

⁸⁷ Bandini, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, pp. 227–28.

⁸⁹ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.13, p. 128. His book provides the best account of ms. 32.2. There is a summary description in Bandini, *Cat.gr.*, II, col. 124.

⁹⁰ N. G. Wilson (1978), ref. I.8a, pp. 390–91.

⁹¹ E. R. Dodds (1986), ref. IV.7, pp. LVI–IX.

of the 'selected' plays in ms.Laur 32.2 are compared with the texts in earlier or nearly contemporary medieval manuscripts, no simple pattern emerges. But, at least, the texts in it of the *Alcestis*, the *Hippolytus* and the *Medea*, are the best that we have.⁹²

The exact sources of the subsequent edition of Euripides (ms.P) continue to be disputed. It is a more luxurious *codex*, written on parchment by a single copyist.⁹³ Only some of the autograph notes by Triklinios in its predecessor (ms.L.Laur. 32.2) reappear in it: the others must have been added by Triklinios in ms.L after ms.P had been partly copied from it.⁹⁴ As far as I can judge from the continuing debate, the alphabetic plays in ms.P were copied from ms.L. Among the 'selected' plays this is also true of the *Rhesos*. The rest of the 'selected' plays in ms.P came from other sources, though their versions are related to the sources of ms.L.⁹⁵ Today ms.P is split between two *codices*, Vat.Pal.Gr.287 and Florentine Laur.Conv.Soppr. 172. Between them, they contain more than ms.L, as the *Bacchae* is almost complete in ms.P and it also contains the *Trojan Women*, missing from ms.L. The first almost complete printed edition of Euripides, published in 1503–4 at Venice by Aldo Manuzio, was based on ms.P. (incorporating Renaissance corrections).⁹⁶

The latest Euripidean edition of Triklinios, recopying his previous versions, was partly written before 1319, but completed after that date. The earlier sections were written for Triklinios, but he rewrote them extensively himself. His autograph sections included all the lyrical parts, revised by him to conform to his 'metrical' doctrines.⁹⁷ For some of the plays (e.g. the *Hecuba*) that edition, in the Roman manuscript Angelicus gr.14, provides the best extant text.⁹⁸

⁹² W. S. Barrett (1964), ref. IV.1, pp. 71–72; L. Méridier (ed.), *Euripide* (Paris, Budé ser.), I (8th ed., 1978), pp. xxxv–xxxvi.

⁹³ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.13, pp. 135–36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7, 12–13.

⁹⁵ These are the main conclusions of Zuntz. See also review of A. Turyn's book on Euripides by H. Lloyd-Jones (1958), ref. IV.11 and E. R. Dodds (1986), ref. IV.7, p. LV.

⁹⁶ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. IV.13, p. 140.

⁹⁷ O. L. Smith (1994), ref. I.5c, pp. 239, 242, 246–47, 249.

⁹⁸ K. Matthiessen, "Manuscript problems in Euripides' *Hecuba*", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 10 (1969), p. 301, n. 35.

VI

"The editorial activity of Demetrios Triklinios is a watershed in the history of the text of Aristophanes".⁹⁹ Ancient commentators attributed to him forty genuine plays¹⁰⁰ and the known ones were produced between 427 and 386 B.C.¹⁰¹ Eleven plays survive. While three comedies, the *Clouds*, the *Frogs* and the *Wealth* (*Plutus*) formed the usual school-selection, Triklinios, in his last edition, was able to include eight. The three remaining comedies were very rare,¹⁰² and were presumably unknown to him.

"Aristophanes is Europe's first and greatest—comic playwright".¹⁰³ "He continues to assert the freedom of the human spirit and invoke the liberating power of laughter."¹⁰⁴ As he claimed himself in the *Clouds*, "always fresh ideas sparkle, always novel jests delight".¹⁰⁵ Some of his plays had a clear satirical aim, and the political satires were astonishingly courageous, advocating peace during an endless, bitter war or deriding the most powerful man in Athens (Cleon). But the dominant aim in all was to amuse and surprise by the fantastic plots as well as to enchant by the beauty of the lyric passages.

Besides the texts of the school-triad, edited by Triklinios' predecessors (especially his probable teacher, Thomas Magistros), and the other five comedies edited by himself, Triklinios inherited a vast array of ancient *scholia*. "They often presuppose a text different from and superior to what we have in our manuscripts".¹⁰⁶ We have in these *scholia* "a greater mass of [ancient] erudition and research than exists for any other author except Homer and possibly Pindar."¹⁰⁷ One major reason for this interest in his plays was the purity of his style and the huge range of his vocabulary. He provided a treasure-house of Attic usage greatly prized by the Greek scholars of Hellenistic Egypt and by their Byzantine disciples.

⁹⁹ Sir K. Dover (1988), ref. V.4, p. 234. The chief sources are listed in section 5 of references to this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ For a list see F. Novati in *Hermes*, 14 (1879), pp. 461–64.

¹⁰¹ V. Ehrenberg (1951), ref. V.5, pp. 375–77.

¹⁰² N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 252. His excellent introduction to the Aristophanic editions is on pp. 251–53.

¹⁰³ R. G. Ussher (1979), ref. V.10, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁵ M. S. Anderson (1965), ref. V.1, p. 74.

¹⁰⁶ K. Dover (1968), ref. V.3, p. cxvi.

¹⁰⁷ G. Murray (1933), ref. V.9, p. 217.

Triklinios re-edited and sometimes supplemented these ancient *scholia*. One amusing example, provided by a *scholion* to the *Achammanians*, recognizes that Aristophanes had been parodying the (largely lost) *Telephos* of Euripides.¹⁰⁸ A *scholion* to the *Knights* commenting on the use of the chorus in ancient comedies was expanded by Triklinios into a comment on the chorus in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus.¹⁰⁹

All this attests to Triklinios' special interest in the techniques of ancient plays. The same preoccupations may help to account for his preference for the *Frogs*. In the Venetian ms. Marc. gr. 472, dating probably from the second decade of the fourteenth century, written by several people, Triklinios "himself can be seen writing" on fo. 65r-v a part of the poetic text and glosses of the *Frogs* (lines 121-39 and 143-62).¹¹⁰ This play was produced in 405.¹¹¹ Its main subject is a contest in the Underworld, presided over by the god Dionysos for the throne of poetry in Hades. Hitherto it had been occupied by Aeschylus, but there was a claim to it by the recently deceased Euripides. It is the earliest piece of criticism inherited by us from antiquity, "using literary criticism to poke fun at literary criticism."¹¹² It is full of echoes of their tragedies, often parodying them. That might have interested Triklinios. The contest had little to say about the contents of their respective dramas and chiefly turned on the contrasting styles of Aeschylus and Euripides. There is much on their use of poetic metres, a subject of obsessive interest to Triklinios.

His successive editions of Aristophanes extended over many years. One of the earliest, in the Parisian ms. Suppl. gr. 463, must be dated to before 1319.¹¹³ It was copied by a scribe much employed by Triklinios, while he himself wrote corrections, supplements and *scholia*. It contains the triad of school-plays (the *Clouds*, the *Frogs*, the *Wealth*) and must have been based on collation of a number of manuscripts, as attested by Triklinios' own notes (e.g. in the *Frogs*).¹¹⁴

We no longer have the original *codex* of the final Triklinian edition, comprising eight plays (lacking the *Thesmophoriazusae* or the

¹⁰⁸ G. Murray (1946), ref. II.8, p. 46; N. G. Wilson (1962), ref. III.25, p. 47.

¹⁰⁹ D. Mervyn Jones (1955), ref. V.7, p. 44. Text quoted in N. G. Wilson (1962), ref. V.12, p. 38.

¹¹⁰ O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, pp. 203-4.

¹¹¹ G. Murray (1933), ref. V.9, chapter V especially pp. 118-34. W. B. Stanford (ed.), *Aristophanes. The Frogs* (London, 1963).

¹¹² M. S. Anderson (1965), ref. V.1, p. 83.

¹¹³ O. L. Smith (1994), ref. I.5c, p. 249.

¹¹⁴ K. Dover (1968), ref. V.3, p. crv and ref. V.4 (1988), p. 224.

"Trial of Euripides", the *Ecclesiazusae* and the *Lysistrata*). But there survive copies of it, of which the best is the Oxford (Bodleian) ms. Holkham gr.88 dating from the first third of the fifteenth century, which had belonged to the distinguished humanist, Guarino Guarini of Verona (d. 1460).¹¹⁵ This *codex*¹¹⁶ contains in its prefatory parts Triklinian texts on Greek metres, it incorporates Triklinian 'metrical' emendations and it includes a large number of Triklinian 'metrical' *scholia*, as well as ordinary *scholia* derived largely from ancient commentators.

Another (unidentified) *codex* of the same Triklinian recension¹¹⁷ was used for the first printed edition of Aristophanes (nine plays) published at Venice in 1498 by Aldo Manuzio, with a distinguished Cretan scholar, Marco Musuro as its editor. He faithfully reproduced the Triklinian *scholia*. However he also used other, non-Triklinian manuscripts.¹¹⁸

I have given an account of the poetry of Theokritos (3rd century B.C.) in discussing a partial edition of his "Idylls" by Planudes. He edited the first eighteen.¹¹⁹ Triklinios took over the edition of the first eight (Planudean, revised by Moschopulos), but provided the fullest edition by a Palaeologan scholar, comprising 27 poems.¹²⁰ They exist in a Parisian ms.gr.2832,¹²¹ written by someone from his scholarly circle. Triklinios recast the old *scholia* and added other notes. For poems 9–27 "a distinction between old *scholia* and Triklinian notes is maintained with almost unfailing regularity".¹²² A parallel copy (today comprising 25 idylls, with *scholia*) exists in mss. Vat. gr.1824–25.¹²³ There are some notes in Triklinios' hand in some other parts of this *codex*, though not on the Theokritean texts.¹²⁴

Triklinios is known to have revised the *Fables* of Babrius (perhaps 2nd century A.D.), a fairly uncommon text. The only early manu-

¹¹⁵ N.G. Wilson (1962), ref. V.12 and M. A. Gianini "Holkham Hall 88: Guarino's Aristophanes", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 12 (1971), pp. 287–89.

¹¹⁶ List of contents in Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–5.

¹¹⁸ N. G. Wilson (1992), ref. I.10, pp. 149–50 and n. 51 on pp. 187–88.

¹¹⁹ Chapter 12, section II.

¹²⁰ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251.

¹²¹ Cf. H. Omont, "Notice sur le manuscrit grec 2832 de la Bibliothèque Nationale", *Revue de Philologie*, new ser., 28 (1904), pp. 192–93.

¹²² N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251.

¹²³ P. Canart, *Codices Vaticani Graeci 1745–1962* (Città del Vaticano, 1970), pp. 240–41.

¹²⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 251 and n. 10.

script of those *Fables* (Brit.Lib. Additional ms.22087), of the tenth century is full of corrections in his hand.¹²⁵ Probably he used these *Fables* for teaching.

Manuscripts written for Triklinios, or used by him, included a version of the "Planudean Anthology" (see section IV of chapter 12), in a redaction after 1316 and a version of the *History* of Herodotus (5th century B.C.), copied by his relative, Nicholas Triklinios (Florentine ms.Laur.70.6). Nicholas also copied a *codex* of Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* and two manuscripts of Libanios, the most important rhetorical teacher of the fourth century A.D.¹²⁶

VII

Triklinios' editions were popular, and though they cannot be said to have driven all others out of circulation, "they were as frequently copied as any others".¹²⁷ For Aeschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes and Theokritos they supplied new portions virtually unknown before.

The importance of Triklinios was known to the Byzantine scholars active in Italy in the second half of the fifteenth century. Andronikos Kallistos, who taught Poliziano at Florence in the early 1470s, may have made him aware of Triklinios' scholarly achievements. In the years 1475–94 Poliziano emerged as the most learned of the Italian students of ancient Greek literature. In one of his earliest works, his translation of book 4 of Homer's *Iliad* (c. 1473–75) he called Triklinios "a most learned and cultivated man". He cited a short tract by Triklinios, which we no longer possess, commenting on the opening verses of the *Iliad*. He praised Triklinios for explaining much in a few words.¹²⁸ References to Triklinios recur in Poliziano's commentary on the *Silvae* of Statius, prepared for his first course of lectures as professor at the University of Florence in 1480–81.¹²⁹

Several of the Triklinian editions became primary sources of the earliest, or the most influential, printed editions in the Renaissance.

¹²⁵ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 250.

¹²⁶ O. L. Smith (1992), ref. I.5b, pp. 188–89.

¹²⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 255.

¹²⁸ I. Maier, "Une page inédite de Politien: la note du Vat.lat.3617 sur Démétrius Triclinius, commentateur d'Homère", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 16 (1954), pp. 7–17. The text itself is edited on pp. 8–9.

¹²⁹ Quoted by me in *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (1996), I, pp. 389 and 410 (n. 418).

In Latin and vernacular translations his editions lay behind the texts that educated Europeans read for several centuries.

The first edition of Aristophanes, in 1498, by the Venetian press of Aldo Manuzio was prepared by Marco Musuro (c. 1470–1517), one of the most distinguished Greeks working in Italy. For eight out of the nine comedies published by him he used the Triklinian edition, both texts and *scholia*, though he also had other manuscripts.¹³⁰ The edition in 1503 by the Aldine press of all the known Euripides plays (except the *Electra*)¹³¹ went back, of course, to the Triklinian edition for the alphabetic plays. Aeschylus was published by the Aldine press in 1518 including the texts of the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides* largely recovered by Triklinios.¹³² An influential edition was published in 1552 by Adrian Turnèbe, the director since 1551 of the French Royal Press. It used the Triklinian recension of Aeschylus as well as the oldest *codex*, ms.Laur.32.9.¹³³

The least satisfactory of the Triklinian editions of the dramatists have been those of Sophocles (see appendix to this chapter). However, here too Triklinios tried to collate older manuscripts. Thus in a note to *Oedipus Rex* (verse 472) he mentioned a reading found in some 'old' *codices*.¹³⁴

In 1553 Turnèbe edited the tragedies of Sophocles, basing himself, unfortunately, on the Triklinian recension.¹³⁵ For over two hundred years this was the standard printed version, reproduced in European editions of Sophocles, until R.P.H. Brunck's more correct edition of 1786 superseded it.¹³⁶

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¹³¹ N. G. Wilson (1992), ref. I.10, p. 141.

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¹³³ R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), p. 111.

¹³⁴ J. Irigoin in *Gnomon*, 50 (1980), p. 53.

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12. N. G. Wilson, "The Triclinian edition of Aristophanes", *Classical Quarterly*, new ser., 12 (1962).

APPENDIX

The text of Sophocles

Sophocles (c. 497/94–c. 406 B.C.) is the only Athenian dramatist whose seven preserved plays are published in modern versions based on manuscripts predominantly preceding in date the editorial activities of the scholars of the Palaeologan Renaissance.¹ A selection of his tragedies was used in the schools and their popularity accounts for the preservation of relatively numerous early manuscripts.²

He was the most conventionally religious of the three preserved Athenian tragedians of the fifth century and his dramas invariably fulfil the tragic destiny of humans predetermined by the gods. In vain his human victims try to defy their fate, but in doing so they are heroic figures, doomed, but of almost superhuman quality. Sophocles endows them with a psychology of great subtlety and this is also a feature of his dramatic plots. There is no evidence to tell us whether Triklinios and his associates appreciated any of these things, which deeply move modern audiences.

Thomas Magistros, Manuel Moschopoulos and Demetrios Triklinios, as well as other anonymous Palaeologan scholars, did multiply Sophoclean manuscripts, without seriously improving their texts. A. Turyn tried to attribute to Moschopoulos an original edition of the selected three school-plays (the *Ajax*, the *Electra*, the *Oedipus Tyrannus*). Turyn's attempt has been demolished, especially through the researches of R. D. Dawe.³ One reason for its collapse was the misdating by Turyn of a number of crucial manuscripts.⁴ Moschopoulos included these three plays in his school manuals. One, the *Ajax* was also included in his composite school selection.⁵ He introduced some improvements from older manuscripts available to him (now lost),⁶ but this did not amount to a new edition. His main personal contribution was to provide a commentary, though this was largely a compilation from older sources and of very uneven quality (above, chapter 8).

There are, likewise, strong reasons for denying that Thomas Magistros produced an original edition of the remaining four tragedies of Sophocles (the *Antigone*, the *Oedipus in Colonna*, the *Trachiniae*, the *Philoctetes*), though he, too, commented on their texts.⁷ Triklinios did produce an edition, based on various earlier *codices*, and he

¹ For this reason, in contrast to the other Athenian dramatists, I only touch briefly on the quality of his tragedies.

² The most recent and the best account of our sources for the extant plays of Sophocles is by H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson, *Sophocles, Fabulae* (Oxford, 1990), pp. vi–xiii.

³ R. D. Dawe, *Studies in the Text of Sophocles*, I (Leiden, 1973). Cf. reviews by N. G. Wilson in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 96 (1976), pp. 171–74 and by J. Irigoin in *Gnomon*, 50 (1978), pp. 721–25.

⁴ Cf. the review by J. Irigoin of A. Turyn, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Sophocles* (Urbana, 1952) in *Revue des Études Grecques*, 67 (1954), pp. 507–11.

⁵ Discussed by A. Dain, “À propos de l'Étude des poètes anciens à Byzance” (originally published in 1956), reprinted in D. Harlfinger (ed.), *Griechische Kodikologie und Textüberlieferung* (Darmstadt, 1980), pp. 231–32. Dain calls it the Moschopuleian *Sylloge*.

⁶ E.g. see above section II of chapter 8.

⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 248 and, especially, E. C. Kopff, “Thomas Magister and the text of Sophocles' *Antigone*”, *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 106 (1976), pp. 241–66.

took over many of the *scholia* of Moschopulos and Thomas, as well as collections of more ancient *scholia*. But our text of Sophocles does not owe much to him.

Six plays by Sophocles were included by Triklinios in the Florentine ms.Laur.32.2, so important for the rediscovery of Euripides (before 1317). A seventh (the *Oedipus Coloneus*) was added in a subsequent Triklinian recension. This final manuscript has not been rediscovered, but can be reconstructed from copies made in the fifteenth century.

Triklinios did try to get beyond the work of his predecessors and found some additional old manuscripts. In a note to the *Oedipus Tyrannus* he records that he found a reading "in one of the old copies". Other similar notes can be found in his final edition.⁸ As one would expect, it also contains his dogmatic metric emendations. That Triklinian edition became in the sixteenth century the main source of the printed editions.⁹

⁸ Wilson (1983), *ibid.*, p. 254.

⁹ Above, section VII.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MANUEL MOSCHOPULOS, THOMAS MAGISTROS AND SOME OF THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

I

The two most important restorers of classical learning, Planudes and Triklinios, have chapters to themselves (12 and 13). In this chapter I discuss a few of their less original and distinguished contemporaries. However, it must never be forgotten that much of the achievement of Planudes and Triklinios was only made possible by the collective support of teams of their pupils and collaborators. These men are less well-known and must remain anonymous, but their activities as copyists, and possibly as searchers after manuscripts, formed an essential part of the progress achieved in recovering and disseminating ancient Greek authors.

I have discussed the main features of the philological scholarship of the period from *c.* 1280 to *c.* 1330 in chapter 8. The enterprises of these scholars arose largely out of their work as teachers and the more technical side of their activities was studied in chapter 11. Here I am only concerned with their contribution to the rediscovery, editing and dissemination of classical texts.¹

The precise dates of Manuel Moschopulos are uncertain. He was a pupil of Planudes. His date of birth is often placed around 1265, but it may have been as late as *c.* 1275. He is not heard of after 1316.² Thomas Magistros, who became a monk under the name of Theodulos, may have been a somewhat younger contemporary of Planudes, teaching at Thessalonica. Demetrios Triklinios may have been his pupil. The earliest *dated* manuscript connected with him was written in 1301. He was still alive in 1346.³

Planudes and Triklinios sought to find numerous manuscripts of each author. They produced editions based on collation of *codices*

¹ See the references to this chapter.

² *Ibid.*, section II.

³ *Ibid.*, section III.

that might be derived from different textual traditions. When they made fresh discoveries, they altered and amplified their previous editions. We are much less confident about reconstructing the methods of Moschopulos and Thomas. Apparently they used a smaller range of manuscripts, though in some cases they record that they, too, did try to base their versions on several *codices*. Thomas says so about his version of some of Pindar's Odes.⁴ Mostly they appear to have adopted the texts that they happened to find⁵ rather than to have produced critical new editions. Their textual work is less original than the editorial achievements of Planudes and Triklinios. This dependence on texts that they happened to discover made their recensions very uneven in quality.⁶ N. G. Wilson, commenting on their versions of the school selection of the three dramas of Euripides, points out a regrettable absence of conjectural emendations of obviously corrupt readings.⁷ The record of Thomas Magistros' editing is worse than that of Moschopulos.⁸

However the two men were competent teachers, compilers of dictionaries of classical words and of other aids to learning (chapter 11). The texts produced by them for their pupils were equipped with useful paraphrases or detailed verbal commentaries, which made them very popular. Out of some 200 known manuscripts of the fifth-century B.C. poet Pindar, over 60 are texts of 8 Olympian Odes annotated by Moschopulos.⁹ We have an attribution by Triklinios of a recension of some poems of Pindar to Thomas Magistros.¹⁰ This must be the reference to a Thoman version, with *scholia* by him, of the Olympian Odes and the four Pythian ones: we know 21 manuscripts.¹¹ Out of some 190 known *codices* of the school selection of three dramas by Sophocles (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*) perhaps as many as 70 stem from a recension by Moschopulos,¹² though because of doubts as to what exactly constituted his version, this total may

⁴ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. I.5, pp. 184–85.

⁵ G. Zuntz (1965), ref. I.9, p. 160, cited in H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, II, p. 73, n. 84.

⁶ E.g. H. C. Günther (1995), ref. II.6, p. 78; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.8, p. 246.

⁷ In *Gnomon*, 38 (1966), p. 338 (review of G. Zuntz, ref. I.9).

⁸ J. Diggle (1991), ref. I.1, p. 3.

⁹ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. I.5, p. 285.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹² *Supra*, chapter 8, section I.

need to be lowered. For the same reason A. Turyn's excessively numerous attributions to Moschopulos of a version of the three school plays of Euripides (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae*) should be scaled down to about 90 known *codices*.¹³ There exist numerous manuscripts of the first 8 *Idylls* of the Hellenistic poet Theokritos annotated by Moschopulos.¹⁴

From the enterprising group of teachers who, as successors of Planudes and Triklinios, transmitted and interpreted the Greek literary heritage in the 1320s and 30s of the fourteenth century I shall select George Karbones and George Lakapenos. The latter was certainly a pupil of Planudes.¹⁵ I shall also discuss two writers on law.

II

There was only one kind of discipline known to Byzantine teachers: the study of ancient texts and commentaries on them. Moschopulos was responsible for a particularly popular school selection with a very helpful verbal commentary, not discussing every word but providing a paraphrase that made these selected texts easy to follow. Explanatory notes provided a useful grammatical commentary. His selection consisted of Homer's *Iliad* (chant 1 and chant 2 down to verse 493, up to the List of Ships), Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the earliest 8 Olympian Odes of Pindar, the traditional school selections of three tragedies each of Sophocles (*Ajax*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*) and Euripides (*Hecuba*, *Orestes*, *Phoenissae*) and the first 8 *Idylls* of Theokritos.¹⁶ Every major Byzantine library appears to have possessed this collection, or some later adaptation of it.¹⁷

Several of these items have been well discussed in modern literature on those authors. Moschopulos' paraphrase of Homer's first two chants was accompanied by longer notes dealing with grammar and discussing synonymous words or other matters deemed relevant by him. Some of this information can also be found in treatises compiled

¹³ B. Schartau (1981), ref. I.7, p. 222.

¹⁴ C. Gallavotti (1934), ref. II.5.

¹⁵ See section IV of the references to this chapter.

¹⁶ A. Dain (1956), ref. II.3b, p. 198; T. Hopfner (1912), ref. I.3, pp. 62–5.

¹⁷ E. Mioni (1971–2), ref. II.8, p. 91.

for his pupils¹⁸ (his *Erotemata*, cf. chapter 11). In annotating Hesiod's *Works and Days* he used a commentary by Proclus reproducing Neoplatonic learning of late antiquity and also some very eccentric *scholia* of Tzetzes (12th century). Compared with these predecessors "he seems a model of common sense" and shows that the best Palaeologan scholars were well equipped to interpret the language of ancient writers. He limits himself to a humble paraphrase, with brief notes, mainly grammatical.¹⁹

Demetrios Triklinios in his autograph manuscript of Euripides (Rome, Bibl. Angelica ms.gr.14) expressly acknowledged that he had used a commentary of Moschopulos on the school selection of three tragedies. He notes that he had marked the Moschopulean comments with a cross.²⁰ Moschopulos had access to a very old tradition of the summary (*epitome*) of the *Phoenissae*, some of his readings agreeing with ten papyrus fragments. We do not know whether that *epitome* accompanied an equally valuable text of that play which he had found or was transmitted in a separate collection of summaries of Euripidean tragedies.²¹ Triklinios noted in his edition of the Olympian Odes of Pindar that some of his grammatical *scholia* were derived by him from the Moschopulean commentary. Moschopulos was familiar with an earlier edition of those Odes by his teacher Planudes and further elaborated the Planudean *scholia*.²² He likewise adapted the Planudean commentary on the first eight *Idylls* of Theokritos. This collection of comments went back ultimately to *scholia* surviving from antiquity.²³

We know also of commentaries on other authors that might be attributed to Moschopulos, but there is much uncertainty about this. N. G. Wilson's general conclusion is "that the quality of his scholarship is difficult to assess", but "at the very least he was able to lay hands on good copies of the texts that interested him".²⁴ He was a self-effacing scholar and avoided criticizing other Byzantine scholars. For instance, though substantially improving the commentary of

¹⁸ R. Browning (1975), ref. II.3, p. 16.

¹⁹ M. L. West (1978), ref. II.10, p. 70. On pp. 71–5 West published a comparison of comments on the same passage by Moschopulos and his two predecessors.

²⁰ B. Schartau (1981), ref. I.7, p. 222.

²¹ W. S. Barrett (1965), ref. II.2, p. 58; Mastronarde and Bremer (1982), ref. I.6, p. 89.

²² J. Irigoin (1952), ref. I.5, pp. 255, 271.

²³ C. Gallavotti (1934), ref. II.5, p. 350.

²⁴ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.8, pp. 245, 247.

Tzetzes on Hesiod, he never criticized him by name.²⁵ A study of his activities leaves an overall attractive impression of the man.²⁶

III

We have more texts to illustrate the activities of Thomas Magistros than of Moschopoulos, and it is a more varied group. I have discussed one of them in the chapter on aids to education, his *Dictionary of Attic Names and Words* (above, chapter 11).

Ms. Vaticanus gr. 714 was apparently written for Thomas after he had become a monk (Theodulos) and corrections in it were presumably dictated by him.²⁷ It contains 19 speeches and letters, starting with an oration in praise of St. John the Baptist. The ninth item is addressed to the chief minister of Andronikos II, Theodore Metochites. It dates probably from 1314–18. He praises Metochites and thanks the imperial minister for helping to reverse the disgrace of Chadrenos, formerly the Byzantine commander at Thessalonica. Thomas came to Constantinople to plead his cause.²⁸ The seventeenth speech, which must be dated not earlier than 1325, was a eulogy of John Kantakuzenos (the future emperor John VI), as the Grand Domestic and commander of Byzantine armies.²⁹ The twelfth item is a letter addressed to Joseph the Philosopher, one of the most distinguished and attractive scholars among his contemporaries.³⁰ There are also some school exercises, in imitation of the sophist Polemon and the famous ancient orator Aristides (both of the 2nd century A.D.), which have attracted much modern comment (see below).

The two speeches that deserve fuller discussion were delivered before the emperor, probably Andronikos II. They read as if they had been delivered on the same visit to the imperial court. One is titled "On Kingship" and the title of the second might be rendered as "On the State" (*"Peri Politeias"*). They both contain unusually

²⁵ M. L. West (1978), ref. II.10, p. 70.

²⁶ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, II, p. 71.

²⁷ F. W. Lenz (1942), ref. III.4a, pp. 156–58.

²⁸ R. Guiland (ed.), *Correspondance de Nicéphore Grégoras* (Paris, 1927), p. 348.

²⁹ D. M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 23, 159. For its rhetorical structure see F. W. Lenz (1963), ref. III.4b, pp. xv–xviii.

³⁰ Above, chapter 10, section VII.

courageous attacks on current evils. The first included denunciations of the sale of imperial offices and the continuous increases in taxation (chapters 19 and 21). The second contained a plea that people occupied in essential crafts should be paid adequately. The chief subject of both speeches was the supreme value of the traditional Byzantine liberal education and the duty of the emperor to encourage this. The emperor should see to it that there should be adequate education in every city. Thomas was advocating something unusual in urging that even men trained to practise crafts should be given wider education; it should not be restricted simply to the rich and leisured. He appears to have been expressing here the ideal of a minority of unusually enlightened Byzantines.³¹

The last two speeches in ms.Vat.gr.714, professing to imitate orations of the Athenian statesman Demosthenes (4th century B.C.), have had a curious fortune. They came to be regarded as authentic speeches of Aristides, the famous orator of the second century A.D.³² They were really school exercises for the instruction of Thomas' pupils and he does not claim them as authentic ancient orations. "The deception arose from careless editorial work of modern scholars." N. G. Wilson's further comment is that the occasional ability of Byzantines "to fool generations of modern scholars extorts a certain admiration".³³ However, one must not exaggerate the quality of this scholastic effort of Thomas. He emerges as "well acquainted with the works of Aristides, but was unable to understand him satisfactorily." There are several notable mistakes of which no ancient Greek writer of the second century A.D. could have been guilty.³⁴

Moschopulos and Thomas Magistros covered in their teaching roughly the same group of authors,³⁵ though Moschopulos tended to deal with smaller selections from the works of each writer. In his commentaries Thomas was specially expert in discussing syntax, grammar and rare words,³⁶ but, unlike Moschopulos, did not know much about poetic metres. He was the most conventional of the four out-

³¹ R. Guiland, *ed. cit.* (1927), pp. 351–52; E. Barker (1957), ref. III.2, pp. 162–73, including the translation of the passages about education (pp. 163–73).

³² Thomas' authorship was convincingly demonstrated by F. W. Lenz (1942), ref. III.4a and he edited them in ref. III.4b (1963).

³³ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, pp. 277–48.

³⁴ *Ibid.* and F. W. Lenz (1942), ref. III.4a, p. 154.

³⁵ A. Garzya, *Storia e Interpretazione di Testi Bizantini* (London, *Variorum Reprints*, 1974), XXIII, p. 208.

³⁶ T. Hopfner (1912), ref. I.3, pp. 54–66.

standing classical scholars discussed by me. N. G. Wilson's summing up of his activities does not suggest an impressive scholar:

all that the evidence permits us to say is that Thomas studied the texts and made adjustments to existing commentaries. That he searched successfully for older and better manuscripts is possible but unproven.³⁷

Triklinios made use of Thomas' commentaries. In Triklinian recensions of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides there are notes identifying the comments he has taken over from Thomas. He identified them by using a capital letter at the start of each Thoman *scholion*.³⁸

The earliest Thoman commentary that can be dated was composed by 1301, but A. Turyn believes that his commentaries on Aeschylus and Euripides were earlier.³⁹ The commentary on Aeschylus was on the three tragedies of the usual school selection, but he commented on at least five out of the known seven Sophoclean tragedies.⁴⁰ The choice of Euripidean tragedies tackled by him was limited to the usual three school plays, but he commented also on summaries of them, derived from older sources, and composed a life of Euripides.⁴¹ He commented likewise on the usual school selection of three comedies of Aristophanes (the *Plutus*, the *Frogs*, the *Clouds*).⁴²

Triklinios attributed to Thomas a recension of some Odes of Pindar and also a Life of that poet. To judge by the contents of the surviving *scholia*, Thomas commented on all the Olympian Odes and the first four Pythian ones.⁴³

Thomas displayed an aggressive arrogance in criticizing other scholars. He castigated their alleged ignorance and empty chattering.⁴⁴ One typical comment was that he had altered the text "because . . . those who keep the usual reading are fools."⁴⁵ He was disturbingly self-assured about the correctness of his scholarship.

³⁷ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, p. 248.

³⁸ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, II, p. 72 (Sophocles); Neapolitan Bibl. Nazionale, II., F. 31, an autograph of Triklinios (Aeschylus, cf. A. Turyn (1943) ref. III.7, p. 106); Rome, Bibl. Angelica, ms.gr.14, an autograph of Triklinios (Euripides, cf. B. Schartau, 1981, ref. I.7, p. 222).

³⁹ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, II, p. 72; E. C. Kopff (1976), ref. III.3, pp. 261, 263.

⁴⁰ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.8, p. 249.

⁴¹ B. Schartau (1973), ref. III.5; J. Irigoin in *Gnomon* 48 (1976), p. 811.

⁴² N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.8, p. 248; O. L. Smith (1976), ref. III.6.

⁴³ J. Irigoin (1952), ref. I.5, pp. 180–85.

⁴⁴ T. Hopfner (1912), ref. I.3, pp. 55–56; H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, II, p. 71.

⁴⁵ D. J. Mastronarde and J. M. Bremer (1982), ref. I.6, p. 90.

IV

George Karbones, a teacher at Constantinople from, probably, the early years of the fourteenth century, and still apparently active there in the 1330s, was one of the minor members of "the distinguished group . . . who transmitted and taught the Greek heritage" in those years. He provides a not untypical example of "those shadowy Byzantine figures whom we only glimpse from time to time through the works of others".

He was a refugee from western Asia Minor, coming from a Lydian city overrun by the Turcomans before 1302–3. A part of only one of his writings survives in a unique text in a manuscript that belonged to him ("In Praise of Constantinople"). His notes on a recension of Aeschylus recur in a number of manuscripts written by other scholars and he also annotated Sophocles. The notes reveal a scholar "who knew where to seek information" in standard Byzantine works of reference.⁴⁶

Much more is known about George Lakapenos, a pupil of Planudes and a scholar of considerable originality.⁴⁷ He was a monk and appears to have taught in Thessaly. The earliest known manuscript is dated in 1318. He did some things not tackled by other scholars. The most influential arose from his interest in Libanios of Antioch, a leading teacher of rhetoric and classicist (314–c. 394 A.D.). Libanios wrote excellent classical Greek, modelled on the best writers and orators. He contributed greatly to the transmission of Greek culture to the learned Byzantine world. Every successive generation of Byzantine scholars admired him.⁴⁸ We know of 1566 letters of Libanios, more than of any person in antiquity. Lakapenos edited a selection of 264 of these, chosen, it appears, because they seemed the most deserving of imitation. They included some correspondence between Libanios and his former pupil, the emperor Julian (361–63). The original feature of his edition was the preface containing the "Life of Libanios" by his contemporary, Eunapios, a vociferous enemy of

⁴⁶ All that is known about him is usefully assembled in R. Browning (1988), ref. IV.1, no. XI.

⁴⁷ I. Voltz (1893), ref. IV.3; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.8, p. 243; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vols. I and II, *passim*.

⁴⁸ R. Foerster, *Pauly's R.E.*, "Libanios", vol. XII, pt. 2; A. J. Festugière, *Antioche Païenne et Chrétienne* (Paris, 1959); G. A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, 1983), pp. 15–63.

the Christians.⁴⁹ A single manuscript of the sixteenth century also attributes to Lakapenos an edition, with a commentary, of the initial part of the *Manual (Encheiridion)* of Epictetus.⁵⁰ This slave, active in the second century A.D. is the most humane of the ancient Stoics. The treatise was a short synopsis of his ethical teaching, preserved by his aristocratic pupil, Arrian.

The composition of Lakapenos preserved in the greatest number of manuscripts was a selection of 32 letters, the majority of which were written by him to friends, though some were letters he had received from them. Those correspondents included two fellow pupils of Planudes. One of these letters was addressed to the distinguished doctor John Zacharias (above, section VI of chapter 10). This selection of correspondence is supplied with a grammatical and lexical commentary for the instruction of his pupils. Clearly Lakapenos had a high opinion of his own capacity to write in distinguished Attic Greek and thought that other pupils of Planudes shared the same distinction (among them the brothers Andronikos and John Zaridas, whose letters are included).

V

The most important writings on law appeared late in the Palaeologan Renaissance. What is striking is how much of earlier authoritative collections had been lost and what strange misconceptions about earlier legal history were widespread among some of the writers of the fourteenth century.

Matthaios Blastares was a monk at Thessalonica.⁵¹ His alphabetically arranged *Syntagma Canonum* aimed at presenting a practical collection of texts on the canon law of the Byzantine church, though it also provided some source-materials on secular law. Its most original feature was a detailed history of the sources of canon law, though it betrays astonishing ignorance in attributing Emperor Justinian's codification of Roman law to Emperor Hadrian, three hundred years earlier, and in believing that Justinian provided a Greek translation

⁴⁹ R. Foerster (1927) and H. Gerstinger (1958), ref. IV.2.

⁵⁰ I. Voltz (1893), ref. IV.3, p. 222.

⁵¹ H. G. Beck (1959), ref. V.1, pp. 786–87; Van der Wal and Lokin (1985), ref. V.2, pp. 117 and 138.

of the Latin texts.⁵² There was a polemical purpose to Blastares' work, attacking the Western church over its theological differences with Byzantine beliefs.⁵³

Constantine Harmenopulos (1320–83) was an important legal official at Thessalonica and, apparently, a native of that city.⁵⁴ His *Procheiron Nomon* consisted of six books and so was popularly cited as *Hexabiblos*. It was completed in January 1345 and provided an exceedingly useful manual of current secular law. The earliest manuscript of his works dates from 1346–47, and, though not his autograph, it may have been commissioned by him (Vatican ms. Ottobonianus gr. 440, fos. 1r–205v). The same *codex* contains his collection of ecclesiastical canons (fos. 209r–246r).⁵⁵ This *Epitome Kanonon* was completed in June 1346. When he wrote those works he was a judge at Thessalonica. A letter of the Constantinopolitan patriarch Philotheos shows that by 1364, and possibly somewhat earlier, he had become a “General Judge of the Romans” (Byzantines).⁵⁶ This made him a member of the supreme tribunal of four such judges, created in 1329 by Andronikos III and originally attached to the capital's imperial palace.⁵⁷ It is not clear whether Harmenopulos functioned singly in that capacity at Thessalonica or came to act at Constantinople.

In his principal publication of 1345 on secular law Harmenopulos explained that the available treatises on law and collections of texts did not provide legal practitioners with all that they needed. So came his decision to write his manual.⁵⁸ The most important collection of older Byzantine legal texts was the *Basilica*, an authoritative work of reference for Byzantine lawyers, but not until 1169 regarded as an official codification of Byzantine law.⁵⁹ The *Basilica* was put together on the instructions of the first two emperors of the Macedonian dynasty (867–912). The second of them, Leo VI, explained in the preface to his edition:

⁵² Van der Wal and Lokin, *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵³ H. G. Beck (1959), ref. V.1, p. 786.

⁵⁴ Beck, *ibid.*, p. 788; P. Lemerle (1948), ref. V.2 (pp. 310–11 on Hermanopulos); J. Verpeaux (1963), ref. V.4; Van de Wal and Lokin (1985), ref. V.3, pp. 118 and 138–9. See also H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, vol. II, pp. 474–75.

⁵⁵ Verpeaux (1963), *ibid.*, pp. 221–24 [description of the Vatican ms.], p. 228 and n. 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 230–31.

⁵⁷ P. Lemerle (1948), ref. V.2.

⁵⁸ Van der Wal and Lokin (1985), ref. V.3, p. 118.

⁵⁹ Cf. Fryde (1996), ref. I.2, vol. II, pp. 615–16.

we have collected together scattered discussions of the same topic and placed them in one and the same title . . . In short, we have kept together everything that is cognate and relates to the same subject.⁶⁰

But Harmenopulos had access only to a part of this collection. He appears to have used everything else that he could find.⁶¹

The *Hexabiblos* became immensely popular and was treated as the authoritative manual as long as the Byzantine state endured, and even for centuries after 1453. It was also adapted to the legal needs of the Balkan Slavonic countries to the north of Byzantium.⁶²

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(See also the references to chapters 8 and 11.)

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1. J. Diggle, *The Textual Tradition of Euripides' Orestes* (Oxford, 1991).
2. E. B. Fryde, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici (1469–1510)* (Aberystwyth, 1996), vol. I, chapter 6 and vol. II, chapter 9.
3. T. Hopfner, "Thomas Magister, Demetrios Triclinios, Manuel Moschopoulos", *Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, 172 (1912).
4. H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 2 vols. (München, 1978), II, pp. 70–76.
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⁶⁰ F. H. Lawson, "The Basilica", *Law Quarterly Review*, 66 (1930), p. 492.

⁶¹ Van der Wal and Lokin (1985), ref. V.3, p. 118.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 118. See also H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, vol. II, p. 475 and D. M. Nicol, *Studies in Byzantine History and Prosopography (Variorum Reprints)*, London, 1986, no. X, p. 131.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE EARLY PALAEOLOGAN RENAISSANCE

I

Historical writings were one of the glories of the century after 1261. "This particular literary form" continued to be deeply "indebted to the style and artistry of the historians of ancient Greece".¹ I shall be chiefly looking here at two historians who are our main sources for the Nicaean Empire, the reign of Michael VIII (1258–82) and much of the reign of Andronikos II (to 1307). George Akropolites (1217–82) and George Pachymeres (1242–c. 1310) were influential high officials, with access to key sources of most important information. They were also distinguished teachers. The scholar who continued the recording of Byzantine history after the end of Pachymeres' narrative, Nikephoros Gregoras, wrote in the second third of the fourteenth century and will be discussed in chapter 18. A curious, brief autobiography written by Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus (1283–89) is chiefly interesting for the information about higher education at Constantinople after 1261. There is also some evidence about this in the writings of Pachymeres.

The controversies about the Union with the Latin church (above, chapters 5 and 6), produced an intelligent, and basically correct, piece of history from John Bekkos (patriarch of Constantinople 1275–82). As a partisan of the Union between the Latin and the Greek churches he adduced a variety of apologetic arguments for the Unionist cause, of which the appeal to history formed only one element, though he rightly regarded it as important. His handling of historical sources is impressive.

¹ F. Dölger, "Byzantine literature", chapter XXVII in *Cambridge Medieval History* (revised ed.), IV, pt. 2 (1967), p. 210.

II

George Akropolites, born at Constantinople in 1217, was at the age of 16 sent by his parents to Nicaea to master Hellenic learning.² By 1246 he was acting as secretary to the emperor John III Batatzes, who next year entrusted to him the education of his heir, the future Theodore II. Under Theodore he became the Grand Logothete, one of the highest offices in the imperial service. He was a prisoner in the hands of the ruler of Epiros (the main Greek enemy of the emperors of Nicaea) between 1257 and 1259. Thus, he was absent when Theodore II died in 1258 and Michael Palaiologos usurped the imperial crown on 1 January 1259. The emperor Michael later that year freed him from captivity. Henceforth George became his most loyal adherent, retaining the office of Logothete. In his *Chronicle* he never mentioned the ruthless dethronement and blinding of Theodore II's young heir, the emperor John IV!³

Constantinople was captured by surprise by a small Byzantine army on 25 July 1261. Akropolites was with Michael VIII on the emperor's triumphal entry into the old Byzantine capital on 15 August 1261. That was the date when Akropolites ended his history. His main initial theme was the loss of Constantinople as the result of disastrous Byzantine misjudgements in 1203–4. Akropolites made that the beginning of his *Chronicle* and the regaining of Constantinople constituted the obvious end to it.

After 1261 Akropolites combined the office of the imperial chief minister with teaching in the newly refounded school of higher education at Constantinople. According to his pupil, the future Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus, he specialized in mathematics, Aristotelian logic and rhetoric.⁴ I mentioned in chapter 10 (sections I and VI) his unusual interest in the Neoplatonists of the 3rd to 5th centuries A.D.

The *Chronicle* was written quite rapidly between late 1261 and, probably, 1264.⁵ In his introduction Akropolites echoed the little treatise of Lucian (second century A.D.) on *How to Write History*. He probably used it directly and repeated its laudable maxims about the need for adhering to the truth and writing with objectivity and

² The sources for this section are cited in section I of the references to this chapter (nos. 2, 4, 6).

³ W. Blum (1989), ref. I.2, p. 57.

⁴ A. Pelendrides (1989), ref. I.8b, p. 15.

⁵ W. Blum (1989), ref. I.2, p. 22.

impartiality.⁶ He departed from this shockingly in narrating the career of the future Emperor Michael VIII in the twelve-fifties. That part of his narrative and the account of Michael's usurpation of imperial power no doubt delighted Michael and anticipated the blatant hypocrisy of Michael's subsequent, own autobiography.⁷ In 1274 Akropolites was the chief negotiator of the Union with the Latin church at the Council of Lyons.⁸ He probably died in the summer of 1282, thus escaping possible disgrace on the death of his master in the following December. However, his son, Constantine, accepted the complete reversal of the religious, pro-Unionist policies of Michael VIII and of his father by Andronikos II and attained the same high state offices once held by George Akropolites.

Where propaganda for Michael VIII was not needed, Akropolites wrote a precise and, on the whole, reliable account of the empire of Nicaea. Like any highly-educated Byzantine, he delighted in the literary devices of rhetoric.⁹ He wrote in elegant Attic Greek and there are echoes of the knowledge of the leading ancient historians. Altogether, by Byzantine standards, his chronicle is a distinguished work of history, though lacking the independence of Pachymeres who deliberately continued it.

III

John Bekkos, since 1264 if not earlier the head of the secretarial and legal office of the patriarchate of Constantinople, himself become patriarch on 26 May 1275.¹⁰ He had become a sincere convert to the cause of the Union with the Latin church and came to be convinced that there were no fundamental *dogmatic* differences dividing the two churches from each other. The historian George Pachymeres, though disapproving after 1282 of Bekkos' theological attitude, expressed great respect for his integrity and intellectual distinction. Nikephoros Gregoras, one of the ablest theological controversialists of the next century, but no friend of the Latins, said of him:

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24

⁷ Edited by H. Grégoire in *Byzantion*, 29–30 (1959–60), pp. 447–76.

⁸ *Supra*, chapter 6.

⁹ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.7, vol. I, pp. 445–46.

¹⁰ The sources for this section are cited in section II of the references to this chapter.

in respect of acuteness of natural talents . . . and of proficiency in the dogmas of the Church, all others in comparison with him were mere children.¹¹

Once he became patriarch, he devoted his many writings to defending the Union of the two churches. His one predominantly historical tract was designed to minimize the precedents for lasting hostility between the Latin and Eastern churches, by proving that the schism in the patriarchate of Photios (patriarch 858–67, 877–86) had ended during his second tenure of that office instead of becoming permanent, as was believed by most Byzantines in the thirteenth century.¹² This treatise should probably be called “On the Lack of Historical Foundation for the Schism between the Churches”.¹³

This explicit appeal to a historical reconstruction of events between 858 and 880, called by Bekkos himself the argument from history (*tes historias*),¹⁴ was something quite unprecedented in Byzantine anti-Latin polemics. J. Gouillard has described it as a ‘revolutionary’ new departure.¹⁵ Our fullest text is in the Florentine ms. Laur. 8.26. This was one of the copies of his writings officially circulated by Bekkos as patriarch and must be dated, at the latest, to the summer of 1276.¹⁶ The same historical facts, and some other historical evidence, reappear in more purely dogmatic writings of Bekkos.

The evidence is very complex, sometimes contradictory. There are a number of doubtful documents and some are undoubtedly forgeries. Bekkos did not know any Latin and, unlike modern scholars, could not check Greek sources by Latin ones. But he knew how to single out vital, genuine sources, and relied especially on Greek versions of some papal letters,¹⁷ the records of Byzantine church councils and the letters of Photios. Bekkos interpreted the evidence acutely and generally drew the correct conclusions from this treacherous documentary labyrinth.

¹¹ J. Gill (1975), ref. II.6, p. 265; G. Dagron (1984), ref. II.3, p. 195 and n. 27.

¹² Edited in V. Laurent and J. Darrouzès (1976), ref. II.10, pp. 424–57. Cf. V. Laurent (1930), ref. II.9, pp. 396–409 and V. Peri (1977–79), ref. II.11.

¹³ Peri, *ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁴ Laurent and Darrouzès (1976), pp. 434–35.

¹⁵ V. Peri (1977–79), ref. II.11, p. 233, n. 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 214 and Laurent and Darrouzès, p. 64.

¹⁷ The relevant texts, both in Latin and in Greek translation, are edited in G. Hofmann (1945), ref. II.7, pp. 147–57.

By Bekkos' times Photios was venerated by the Byzantine opponents of the Union with the Latin church as the hero of Byzantine enmity to the Papacy, as the inaugurator of a permanent schism between the two churches and the chief exponent of dogmatic reasons for regarding the Latin church as incurably heretical. It was Bekkos' purpose to prove that this was all myth.

Bekkos showed, quite correctly, that the schism arising out of the promotion to the patriarchate of Photios was a short-lived incident (acute schism between 863 and 870, ended by late 879). He also demonstrated, again correctly, that after the reconciliation between Pope John VIII and Photios in 879–80 there was for many years no further breakdown of communion between the Latin and the Greek Churches. He wisely ignored the various anti-Photian concoctions which tried to prove the opposite.

In speaking of Photios, Bekkos began by describing him, deservedly, as a man of great learning.¹⁸ He went on to argue that Photios' feuds with Popes Nicholas I and Hadrian II were not due to doctrinal differences, but to personal and political conflicts. He was right to stress that Photios attacked the divergent Latin doctrines and practices (in 867) only after he had despaired of winning his personal struggle against the Papacy, though, one must admit that Photios' undoubted aversion to the doctrines and practices criticized by him played some part in the acerbity of his attack on Pope Nicholas I in that year. Bekkos maintained that Photios' excessively hostile acts (including the excommunication of Nicholas I) put primary responsibility for the schism upon him, though the violence of the papal denunciations of him gave him ample provocation. Bekkos was writing here with a historical objectivity normally absent from these controversies, but he certainly laid the heaviest blame on Photios for what he described as a scandalous and unnecessary schism. Nothing could be further from the admiring myths about Photios espoused by many of Bekkos' Byzantine contemporaries.

The one major doctrinal issue dividing the Latin and Orthodox churches was the dispute about the Procession of the Holy Ghost. I have discussed in chapter 5 the origins and deeper causes of this division and I need here only sum up those aspects of this problem that explain Bekkos' views. The addition by Latin churchmen to the

¹⁸ Laurent and Darrouzès, pp. 434–35.

Nicaean creed of 325 of further words describing the Holy Ghost as proceeding from *both the Father and the Son* ("the Double Procession") was regarded by all informed Byzantines as not binding, because it had never been adopted by a universal council of the whole church. Bekkos shared that view, but he became convinced that there was no fundamental difference in the beliefs of the two churches about the Trinity.

The Byzantine enemies of the Union also regarded the Western formula as heretical, which meant to them that no communion with the Latin Church was admissible.¹⁹ Bekkos came to reject this attitude. He was also convinced, not incorrectly, that there existed old precedents for not rejecting the Latin formula in the teachings of St. Basil²⁰ and other leading Greek Church Fathers in the second half of the fourth century A.D. He became convinced that the amplified Latin formula did not deny the *spirit* of the valid doctrine of the Trinity.²¹

As he noted in his historical treatise, the difference between Latin and Byzantine beliefs reduced itself to a single word.²² Variants of this reappeared in two letters written in 1277 by Bekkos to Pope John XXI,²³ himself a distinguished theologian and scholastic teacher.

In the Latin formula the Holy Ghost proceeded from God (the Father) and Christ (the Son), the Greek translation of the crucial preposition being *ek* (from). The wording mainly used by Bekkos was that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father *through* (*dia* in Greek) the Son, though he also used other, equivalent expressions.²⁴ That Greek dogmatic formulation derived from St. John of Damascus, one of the most authoritative Byzantine theologians (8th century A.D.).

The Byzantine church valued above all the continuity of doctrine, though liturgy might evolve.²⁵ The belief of the Byzantine anti-Unionists that there had been a continuous schism since the time of Photios, and that his chief motive for the anti-Latin stance was his

¹⁹ The Byzantine anti-Unionist documents of the thirteenth century enumerating Latin heresies invariably put *filioque* as the first item. Cf. A. Argiriou in *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 4 (1972), p. 25.

²⁰ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.4, vol. II, p. 499.

²¹ G. Dagron (1984), ref. II.3, p. 197.

²² Laurent and Darrouzès, pp. 432–33.

²³ Dagron, p. 194 and n. 18 on p. 200.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

²⁵ J. Meyendorff, "Continuities and discontinuities in Byzantine religious thought", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), pp. 69–70, 81.

alleged rejection of the *Filioque* formula, confirmed for them the long-established edifice of the repudiation of the Latin church. Bekkos' historically correct disproof of all this undermined one of the pillars of the anti-Unionist tradition.

Some time after Photios' second deposition from the office of patriarch (in 886) he wrote a theological repudiation of the *Filioque* formula (his *Mystagogia*). But he only blamed "certain Latins" for it and did not attribute responsibility to the Papacy. Indeed, at that time the insertion of the *Filioque* into the creed was a practice of the Frankish church and not of the Roman liturgy.²⁶ Bekkos knew this perfectly well, as he wrote against that treatise of Photios.²⁷ Bekkos here, as in his earlier historical treatise, was, justifiably, trying to bury the tenacious Byzantine myth about the alleged *doctrinal* role played by *Filioque* in the schism of 863–79 and thus destroy one of the main traditional objections to the reconciliation of the two churches in 1274.

The same arguments about the Photian schism, and its ending in 879–80, were repeated at a considerable length in the *Dogmatic History* of George Metochites, the loyal ally of Bekkos. It was written during his long imprisonment after 1283, when the Union of 1274 was repudiated by Andronikos II. Metochites added no new facts, but was a much better writer than Bekkos. It survives in the Florentine ms. Laur. 7.31, an autograph of Metochites.²⁸

A generation later (perhaps c. 1320) Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos completed a *History of the Church* from the birth of Christ to 610 A.D.²⁹ He dedicated it to Andronikos II. It is merely a compilation, but was based on much research. The author was a priest of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The one thing he had in common with Bekkos was their use of the patriarchal library there. His ample use of many of the most important church histories written between the early fourth and the late sixth centuries (from Eusebius to Evagrius) testifies to the wealth of religious literature preserved at the library attached to St. Sophia.³⁰

²⁶ É. Amann (1935), ref. II.2, col. 1542; J. Hussey (1990), ref. II.8, p. 87.

²⁷ L. Petit (1924), ref. II.12, col. 659.

²⁸ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. II.5, vol. II, p. 499.

²⁹ M. Jugie (1931), ref. I.8 and F. Winkelmann (1994), ref. I.11.

³⁰ Jugie, *ibid.*, col. 446; H. G. Beck (1959), ref. I.1, pp. 705–6.

IV

The short *Autobiography* of George of Cyprus (patriarch of Constantinople as Gregory II, 1283–89) is one of the many extant “autobiographies of writers”.³¹ It contains only a few allusions to his ecclesiastical career and its main theme is his zeal for learning and his long search for a satisfactory education.³² This was only satisfied after the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261. Gregory, with many other refugees at Nicaea, moved to the recaptured capital, where he was able to study under George Akropolites. From about 1273 until his elevation to the patriarchate he was himself a distinguished teacher at Constantinople. His correspondence (242 letters survive)³³ adds valuable information about his pupils and some of the ancient writers he was using.³⁴

Gregoras, who had studied under one of Gregory’s most distinguished former students, remembered him as the reviver of a good ancient Greek style. Nikephoros Chumnos, later a leading minister of Andronikos II, recalled that Gregory trained his students in rhetoric and Plato, Demosthenes and Aristides.³⁵ We know from one of his letters that a manuscript of Demosthenes belonging to Gregory was copied for Theodora Raulaina, a niece of Michael VIII.³⁶ His other letters to friends include requests for copies of Aristotle’s *Ethics* and of Syrianos’ (early 5th century A.D.) Neoplatonic *Commentary* on Plato’s *Parmenides*, a rare work.³⁷ Gregory’s autograph manuscript of the *Commentary* of Simplicius on Aristotle’s *Physics* is our earliest surviving almost complete version and contains a very good text.³⁸ His *Autobiography*, in its sincere enthusiasm for learning, is a precious testimonial to that “Byzantine humanism about which we need to know so much more”.³⁹

³¹ Definition of G. Misch. Cf. A. Garzya (1974), ref. I.5, no. XIII, pp. 34–35.

³² Edition in W. Lameere (1937), ref. I.8b, pp. 177–91, reprinted in A. Pelendrides (1989), ref. I.9.

³³ Lameere, *ibid.* (1937), p. 153.

³⁴ There is a useful account of his teaching in C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.4. His secular writings are briefly listed in F. Cayré (1920), ref. I.3.

³⁵ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.4, pp. 46–47.

³⁶ D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady . . . 1250–1500* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 43.

³⁷ Constantinides (1982), ref. I.4, p. 36, n. 21.

³⁸ Section II of chapter 10.

³⁹ A. Garzya (1974), ref. I.5, XIII, pp. 35–36.

V

George Pachymeres (1242–*c.* 1310)⁴⁰ was one of the most versatile scholars of the early Palaeologan Renaissance and, certainly, its most distinguished historian. He was born at Nicaea and interest in the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor runs through his history of the years 1255 to 1307. He moved to Constantinople after its reconquest by Michael VIII. After a period of teaching at the Patriarchal Academy at Constantinople, he became one of the most senior members of the Patriarchal Council, though there is no evidence that he ever became a priest. He also acted as one of the judges of a superior imperial court at Constantinople. He avoided compromising himself in the whirlpool of political factions and religious controversies, but his history reveals his personal integrity and consistent independence of judgement. One wonders whether it could ever have circulated in his lifetime. It was available to Nikephoros Gregoras by the 1330s, but it is worth stressing that the best manuscripts of the first six books on the end of the rule of the Laskarid dynasty (1255–58) and the reign of Michael VIII date only from the middle decades of the fourteenth century.⁴¹

Pachymeres' philosophical and scientific writings are discussed in chapters 10 and 17. While he was an expert on Byzantine Aristotelian learning, he was also one of the main pioneers in reviving the study of the Neoplatonists, integrally connected with his writings on the Pseudo-Dionysius, the outstanding adapter of the Neoplatonic outlook to Christian ends (above, chapter 10). Of course, he also had an expert grasp of the theological issues underlying the religious controversies of his time and much of his history is devoted to them.

G. G. Arnakis treats Pachymeres as an outstanding representative of Byzantine Christian humanism and speaks of his spiritual world as representing a "cross-section between Christian values and classical Greek ideals". This is quite true. Writing of humanity's proneness to disregard the divine code of right conduct in committing acts of aggression he remarked that war was "sweet to those who have no experience of it",⁴² anticipating almost exactly the words of Erasmus

⁴⁰ The sources on Pachymeres are listed in section 3 of the references to this chapter.

⁴¹ A. Failler (1979), ref. III.4a, pp. 129–36, 197.

⁴² G. G. Arnakis (1966–67), ref. III.2, p. 165. See also H. Hunger (1978), ref. III.6, I, p. 451.

in one of his pacifist 'Adages'.⁴³ In discussing the plan of Michael VIII, at the end of his reign, to use Mongol troops against Greek Epirds, he remarked that

this plan was quite appropriate for a soldier, but to a Christian it appeared most improper. For it seemed that to launch impious men against Christians and godless people against sacred things was the act of those who are indifferent to the fear of God.

He follows this passage with the account of Michael VIII's last illness and death, treating it as an instance of "God's swift justice".⁴⁴

Pachymeres returned to the older Byzantine historiographical tradition of Zonaras and Choniates in castigating outspokenly the abuses and cruelties of the imperial absolutism. Unlike Akropolites, he mentions the blinding in 1261 by Michael VIII of the last Laskarid, the emperor John IV, a child of ten.⁴⁵

Byzantine historians usually stated at the outset that their supreme duty was the telling of truth. As H. Hunger stresses, Pachymeres, more than most, really tried to adhere to this.⁴⁶ He wrote that "truth is . . . the soul of history and he who prefers lies to the truth is sacrilegious". If there were truths which he could not reveal, he preferred to omit them rather than lie, for it was better for posterity to be ignorant of something, than to be wrongly informed. In his preface, following, it seems, Thucydides, he explained that he did not rely merely on hearsay. He says that he writes of things he himself saw, or heard about from participants, whose stories have been checked against the evidence of others. "For the most part Pachymeres is able to keep his pledge". Pachymeres is a more accurate historian than his continuator, Gregoras (below, chapter 18), "with better critical judgement".⁴⁷

Our knowledge of the years 1258–1307 is so heavily dependent on Pachymeres that to illustrate his contribution adequately would necessitate writing a detailed account of the period. Only a few outstanding passages can be singled out. He provides our only convincing narrative of what happened after the death of the emperor

⁴³ M. Mann Phillips (transl.), *The Adages of Erasmus*, (1964), p. 299 ("*Dulce bellum inexpertis*"), from 1515 Basle edition by Froben (3rd edition of the *Adagia*).

⁴⁴ A. E. Laiou (1993), ref. III.11, p. 118.

⁴⁵ H. Ahrweiler (1966), ref. III.1, p. 335, n. 1.

⁴⁶ H. Hunger (1978), ref. III.6, I, p. 449.

⁴⁷ A. E. Laiou (1972), ref. III.9, p. 346.

Theodore II in 1258, unlike Akropolites who tries to conceal rather than reveal what really happened. At the time Michael Palaiologos was the commander of the foreign mercenaries in Byzantine service. Pachymeres reports the widespread belief among his informants then present at Nicaea that Michael secretly encouraged these troops to murder the brothers Muzalon, the loyal custodians of the child emperor John IV, at the church service of commemoration for the deceased Theodore II, nine days after his death. But a separate body of Varangian guards, commanded by one of Theodore's loyal friends, at first denied Michael access to the imperial treasure, though he managed ultimately to seize it. This was the start of his successful usurpation of the imperial throne.⁴⁸

Pachymeres alone reports that the surprise recapture of Constantinople by Byzantine troops on 25 July 1261 was viewed with dismay by some of the high officials at Nicaea, who were natives of Byzantine Asia Minor. They foresaw, correctly, that the territories in Western Asia Minor will be neglected henceforth and this, indeed, paved the way for the capture of most of them by various Turkish rulers in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.⁴⁹ After his triumphal entry into Constantinople Michael VIII issued a proclamation announcing that the recovery of the old Byzantine capital would be followed by the recapture of other lost regions of the Empire. Pachymeres preserves this text and the grandiose programme enunciated in it, a forecast of Michael's over-ambitious policies, which disastrously overstretched Byzantine resources of troops and money.⁵⁰

The nature of the story he had to tell made impartiality feasible.⁵¹ The two emperors whose reigns he was recording did not command unquestioned praise. He was appreciative of the considerable ability and achievements of Michael VIII, but could not condone the cruelties and megalomaniac policies. Besides, he was privately opposed to Michael's appeasement of the Papacy and of the Catholic church. But, though he disapproved of the pro-Catholic theology of Patriarch John Bekkos (1275–82), he expressed great respect for Bekkos's integrity and intellectual distinction. His treatment of Michael VIII is most of the time very critical. He always mentions Michael's

⁴⁸ P. Karlin-Hayter (1972), ref. I.7, pp. 146–49.

⁴⁹ H. Ahrweiler (1966), ref. III.1, pp. 331–32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 332–33. See also above, chapter 5.

⁵¹ A. E. Laiou (1972), ref. III.9, p. 346.

failures. He notes his ruses and perjuries, intrigues, hypocrisy, and perfidy. It is a record of a considerable intelligence turned to evil.⁵²

Like all scholars at Constantinople, Pachymeres appreciated the genuine enthusiasm for learning of Andronikos II and seems to have been much closer to him than to his ruthless father. But as a chronicler of his reign he could not overlook the personal weaknesses, lack of wise judgement, and the grievous mistakes of this inadequate man. His reign was inglorious and full of disasters. Pachymeres was painfully aware of the decline of the Empire and of the loss of most of his native Asia Minor (see also chapter 6).

Pachymeres demonstrated how a relatively small Byzantine army led by a good general could stem the Turkish conquests in Asia Minor. This happened when Alexios Philanthropenos won a series of victories in Western Anatolia in 1294–95. As Pachymeres explains, “the local population, having at last found a defender, joined him and gave him their loyalty”.⁵³ Unfortunately, Alexios was encouraged to rebel and came to disaster late in 1295, as recorded by Pachymeres. He then tells us that Andronikos II was so disturbed that henceforth “he suspected all the Romans” (i.e. Byzantines).⁵⁴ This distrust led him to commit the folly of inviting a Catalan army to fight the Turks. In 1304 they, too, were at first successful, but they ravaged indiscriminately and soon turned against Byzantium. After years of plundering they eventually carved out a principality for themselves centred on Thebes and Athens (1305–11), which endured until 1388 (chapter 6). Pachymeres’ long account of the Catalan depredations is quite different from the narrative by the Catalan Muntaner, a member of their army, but “Pachymeres gives a more complete and satisfactory account of the over-all behaviour of the Catalan Company”⁵⁵ (down to the early summer of 1307).

Some recent historians have been attracted by the personality of Athanasios I, twice patriarch of Constantinople (1289–1293, 1303–9). He was “a fanatically rigorist and ascetic monk”,⁵⁶ completely indifferent to all learning except the Bible and the Byzantine Church Fathers (chapter 6). His charitable activities, especially in the times of famine,

⁵² A. Kazhdan (1980), ref. III.8, pp. 302–3.

⁵³ A. E. Laiou (1978), ref. III.10, p. 89.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

⁵⁵ A. E. Laiou (1972), ref. III.9, p. 347.

⁵⁶ D. Nicol (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1991), p. 12.

made him admired by many of the ordinary people of Constantinople. Pachymeres corrects what may be an over-favourable image. He held high office under Athanasios, but regarded him as a major source of trouble and divisions within the Orthodox church.⁵⁷

The revival of interest in ancient geographical learning, as well as the disastrous pressures on Byzantium from its northern and eastern neighbours, led Pachymeres to give much attention to the various Balkan and Asiatic peoples whose activities now shaped Byzantine destiny.⁵⁸ What he tells us about the Turks and the Mongols is particularly valuable, but it forms part of a well-informed account of the inter-related events in the whole region of the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, Iran, and the lands bordering on the Black Sea.

The depth of Pachymeres' understanding of a series of inter-related developments which spanned almost twenty years is indicated by the fact that he discusses them together.⁵⁹

We owe to him, under 1301, the earliest mention of Osman, the founder of the Turkish Ottoman dynasty. He is a valuable source for the career of the Mongol general Nogai, who controlled the northern shores of Asia Minor and was from 1290 the overlord of Bulgaria. He provides a very attractive account of the Ilkhanid Khan Ghazan, the first Mongol ruler of Iran to adopt officially the Muslim religion (1295–1304). Andronikos II missed a chance of allying himself with this remarkable man, who was willing to reconquer Jerusalem for the Christians. Pachymeres was well-informed about his kingdom and described Ghazan, though a barbarian, as a ruler who “behaved as a just king”⁶⁰ Other sources amplify the image of an enlightened patron of learning, who founded an important astronomical observatory at his capital of Tabriz.⁶¹

⁵⁷ H. Hunger (1978), I, ref. III.6, pp. 451–52.

⁵⁸ A. E. Laiou (1993), ref. III.11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 119–20.

⁶¹ A. Tihon, *Études d'Astronomie Byzantine* (Aldershot, 1994), V, p. 471.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THEODORE METOCHITES (c. 1270–1332)

I

George Metochites, Theodore's father, was a leading advocate of the Union of Eastern and Western churches. Under Andronikos II he was imprisoned until his death (d. by 1327).¹ This did not hinder the splendid career of Theodore.² Andronikos loved to surround himself with well-educated men of strong intellectual interests and Metochites seemed an ideal recruit for the imperial court. Throughout his career in the imperial service he remained on good terms with the leading Byzantine churchmen. George Palamas, the future venerated spokesman of the Hesychasts, austere monastic anti-western ascetics, was in his younger days a pupil of Metochites.³ But as a statesman and administrator he was in many respects an unsatisfactory councillor to the ineffective Andronikos.

Metochites came to the emperor's notice in 1290, aged about 20. By 1305–6 he was the chief minister of Andronikos II and he retained the emperor's complete trust,⁴ until they were both overthrown by a revolution organized by the emperor's grandson, Andronikos III (23–24 May 1328). Highly-placed contemporaries, like Prince Theodore (1291–1338), a younger son of Andronikos II, in his *Enseignements* (written in 1326 with an epilogue added after 1328),⁵ regarded Metochites' influence as disastrous. He also denounced the chief minister's avarice, corruption and abuses of power.⁶ These charges are certainly justified and are accepted by I. Ševčenko, the best biographer

¹ S. Salaville, "Georges le Métochite", *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 6, pt. 1 (1920), coll. 1238–39; R. J. Loenertz (1953), ref. I.6; I. Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8, p. 130.

² The best short account is in I. Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9.

³ J. Meyendorff, "Spiritual trends in Byzantium in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries", ref. I.10, vol. IV (1975), p. 96.

⁴ J. Verpeaux (1955), ref. I.11, pp. 276–77; J. Verpeaux (1960), ref. I.13; C. Knowles (ed., 1983), ref. I.5, pp. 9, 108.

⁵ Knowles, *ibid.*, pp. 2–4. For the full title see p. 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

of Metochites.⁷ As Prince Theodore mentions, he accumulated an immense fortune. At the fall of this flawed regime his palace, one of the marvels of Constantinople, was sacked and largely destroyed.⁸

Prince Theodore laid bare the disturbing contrast between the fine-sounding words of Metochites and his overriding determination to get on in life. Also, as the emperor's chief adviser, he presided over a succession of external defeats and internal disasters. Prince Theodore thought that a man with some sound military experience, which Metochites wholly lacked, might have been a more useful chief counsellor.⁹

But I shall be concerned with Metochites henceforth solely as a writer on classical and scientific subjects. This side of him reveals the potential of the educated, lay, Byzantine elite for intelligent, cultural achievements. He prided himself, above all, on his astronomical writings, but today we are impressed most of all by the independence and originality of some of his literary and historical essays. His experience as a statesman made him capable of thinking of some of the great men of antiquity in a way that was not anachronistic, as when he described Demosthenes as a greater orator than Aristides, because the speeches of Demosthenes were concerned with a deadly crisis in the destinies of Athens while Aristides was producing declamations remote from the problems of real life. Metochites was almost unique among Byzantine writers in being able to think sympathetically and realistically about two of the greatest Greek orators. Nor did his own sordid malpractices in power destroy his capacity to appreciate spiritual greatness in others, as he showed in his sensitive writings about St. Gregory of Nazianzus.

Metochites was a friend and patron of leading scholars, Joseph the Philosopher, Manuel Bryennios and his favourite young assistant, Nikephoros Gregoras. Between 1316 and 1321 he restored the church of the monastery of Chora near his own palace. His overall decorative scheme at Chora embodied a synthesis of the main traditions of Byzantine religious art. The mosaics in Chora's church are a wonderful monument of that artistic technique.¹⁰ His own scholarly library was fortunately preserved at Chora and remained one of the largest libraries at Constantinople.

⁷ I. Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9, pp. 21, 23–4.

⁸ R. Guiland (1922), ref. I.3, p. 82.

⁹ Knowles (1983), ref. I.5, p. 9.

¹⁰ P. A. Underwood (1966), ref. I.10; I. Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9. (below, section IV).

II

We possess a number of manuscripts commissioned by Metochites and seem to have most of his writings, filling 1881 folios in four surviving *codices*. Their chronology can be reconstructed fairly well. Only his collections of selected letters were lost in a later fire (in 1671).¹¹

The writings which secure for Metochites an important place in the intellectual history of his time date from roughly the last fifteen years of his life (1317–32). He himself tells us that his early rhetorical enterprises consisted chiefly of hagiographical compositions, with eulogies of important Byzantine saints, and of speeches in praise of the emperor and his family. The initial series of 12 *logoi* (speeches and prose compositions), preserved in his own Viennese ms.phil.gr.95, bears this out.¹² The first, in praise of Nicaea, delivered in 1290 in the presence of Andronikos II, may have initially attracted the emperor's attention to him.¹³ Two orations are in praise of the emperor (the second in 1294–95 at the latest). In the first, Metochites reiterates the traditional doctrine that the emperor, as the most superior ruler, should have equal regard (*philanthropia*) for all his subjects irrespective of their ethnic origin.¹⁴ The eleventh was in praise of Constantinople, landed as the greatest centre of learning in the world.¹⁵

The most important scholarly enterprise of Metochites was his huge *Introduction to Astronomy* (c. 1317), constituting a commentary on the *Mathematical Syntaxis* of Ptolemy of Alexandria (c. 100–178 A.D.). It was a work sure to enhance the admiration of his imperial master for him. Andronikos regarded astronomy as a sublime science, fit only for a select elite.¹⁶ In one of his learned essays (*Miscellanea*, no. 43) Metochites speaks of it as a science that “could elevate the spirit and lead men to a deeper understanding of divine purpose”.¹⁷

¹¹ Ševčenko (1962 and 1982), ref. I.8 and ref. I.9; Prato (1991), ref. I.7, pp. 140–48.

¹² Prato, *ibid.*, pp. 141, 145; Ševčenko, *ibid.*, ref. I.9, pp. 177–81.

¹³ Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9, p. 20.

¹⁴ H. Hunger, “Philanthropia . . .” in his *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung* (London, 1973), XIII, p. 12.

¹⁵ H. Hunger in *Epidosis* (München, 1989), XX, p. 24.

¹⁶ Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9, p. 18.

¹⁷ Cited in D. M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 58 and n. 83.

In a late poem (the 12th) Metochites describes this Ptolemaic commentary as his major contribution to useful studies¹⁸ (cf. section IV of chapter 17).

His *logoi* 12 and 13 must date from after 1317. They are two lengthy polemical pieces against Nikephoros Chumnos,¹⁹ whom Metochites had replaced as chief imperial minister after 1305–6. We have also three pamphlets by Chumnos against Metochites. Though the debate was confined to literary and scholarly controversies, it was really motivated by their political rivalry.²⁰ Ostensibly it turned on Chumnos' criticisms of his rival's literary style and on mutual reproaches about alleged conflicts with the teachings of Plato and misinterpretations of Aristotle. Further, Metochites paraded his expertise in mathematics and astronomy as one crucial proof of his superiority over Chumnos.²¹ This exchange of pamphlets is a wonderful illustration of the peculiar nature of Byzantine culture at this time. One observes with mixed wonder and distaste that a contest for supreme political power between two leading imperial ministers should produce this offshoot of scholastic controversy. Nothing comparable was conceivable in the principalities of Western Latin Europe.

A student of Metochites' personality can learn much from his two contributions to this unappealing debate. Some of his intellectual limitations stand out as well as his obscurantist notions about what constituted good literary style. Chumnos criticized him about the lack of clarity and simplicity in his writings and even Gregoras, who admired Metochites immensely, mentioned the obscurity of his style,²² excessive even by Byzantine standards of turgid rhetoric.²³ Among the few facts of scholarly value to be extracted from Metochites' two diatribes against Chumnos is his great admiration for Thucydides, whom he also quotes in some of his miscellaneous essays: on the monarchy (as his source on the evils of its opposite, the democracy of ancient Athens) and on the ancient Greeks.²⁴

¹⁸ R. Guiland (1959), ref. II.3, no. IX, p. 200.

¹⁹ Edited by Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8, pp. 188–265 (with a French translation).

²⁰ J. Verpeaux (1959), ref. I.12, p. 176.

²¹ Verpeaux (1959) and Ševčenko (1962), *passim*.

²² N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.14, p. 256.

²³ But see above, section II of chapter 9.

²⁴ Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8, pp. 208–9; E. Barker (1957), ref. I.1, pp. 177, 183.

III

For both Metochites, and his imperial master, Andronikos II, a decisive turning point towards disaster occurred in October 1320, with the death of Andronikos' eldest son, and co-emperor, Michael IX.²⁵ Michael's son, the future Andronikos III, began a series of conspiracies and revolts that ended in the dethronement of his grandfather in May 1328. It is in the shadow of these constant tribulations that Metochites was writing his collection of *Miscellanea*, or to give them their exact title, *Commentaries and Moral Judgements*.²⁶ They were short essays on diverse political, historical and philosophical subjects, a kind of encyclopedia of useful studies, imitating especially the writings of Plutarch.²⁷ It may have been published shortly before his fall from power²⁸ (23–24 May 1328), followed by his exile. In 1330 he was allowed to come back, as a monk, to his monastery of Chora and its library. There he wrote one of his most important literary studies (*logos* 17, see below) and a collection of autobiographical poems, which form a kind of continuation of the *Miscellanea*. The last poem (the 20th) may have been cut short by his death on 13 March 1332.²⁹

There are 120 essays in the *Miscellanea*,³⁰ preserved in the Parisian ms.gr.2003. This was copied for Metochites and the same scribe also wrote in the Vienesse ms.Phil.gr.95 the two *logoi* (12 and 13) directed against Nikephoros Chumnos. The same scribe copied in Vatican ms.Urb.gr.123 the speeches of Aristides³¹ and this may have been the personal copy belonging to Metochites of this outstanding orator of the second century A.D., vitally important to him (see below).

A. Pertusi and I. Ševčenko would deny to Metochites the title of 'humanist'. For Ševčenko, if this term is to be applied to him at all, it can only refer to his "knowledge of antiquity".³² If one contemplates his corrupt political career or his contempt for the great mass of lower humanity "living like beasts and making no use of reason"

²⁵ Cf. the 8th poem of Metochites in R. Guiland (1959), ref. II.3, no. IX, p. 189.

²⁶ R. Guiland (ed.), *Nicéphore Grégoras Correspondance* (Paris, 1927), p. 360. For a selection of their contents see *ibid.*, pp. 360–62.

²⁷ H. Hunger (1952), ref. I.4, p. 9. A good summary of its contents, *ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁸ For the probable date cf. M. Gigante (1981), ref. II.2, p. 170 and n. 13.

²⁹ H. Hunger (1952), ref. I.4, p. 7.

³⁰ I. Ševčenko and J. Featherstone (1981), ref. II.5, p. 2.

³¹ G. Prato (1991), ref. II.7, p. 145.

³² I. Ševčenko, ref. II.9 (1982), pp. 40–41 and n. 166 on those pages. Much of the text of this section III is based on Ševčenko's fascinating article.

(*logos* 10), one can appreciate their reservations about his 'humanism'. But if one concentrates on his literary writings and contemplates the beauty of the monastery of Chora, restored by him (section IV, below), one can share the enthusiasm of M. Gigante for his Christian humanism, though Ševčenko expressly dissents from this view.³³ All that Ševčenko would concede is that Metochites deserves

some of our admiration. To have given us the Chora he had to be a man of wealth, taste and intelligence. He did not have to be a perfect gentleman.³⁴

Metochites cited some 80 ancient writers and he had indeed read many of them. Almost all his critical literary essays deal with secular, prose writers, many of them the leading authors of antiquity: Xenophon (c. 430—after 350 B.C.), Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus (1st century A.D.), his favourites Plutarch and Lucian, Dio 'Chrysostom' (40–120 A.D.) and Dio's great admirer Synesios (d. c. 413 A.D.), Demosthenes and Aristides, two of the greatest ancient orators.³⁵

As H. G. Beck has stressed, he was the first late Byzantine author capable of thinking of the late ancient writers and orators within their own authentic context.³⁶ He was an enthusiastic student of ancient history, with much of his information derived from Plutarch. His use of Plutarch was greatly facilitated by the earlier editions by Planudes of the augmented editions of Plutarch's writings. In *logos* 10 he wrote that the study of works about antiquity

kept one spellbound and created an insatiable desire for more historical knowledge—a spell and a desire which had to be experienced to be understood.³⁷

This historical approach extended to the Greek Church Fathers of the late antiquity. His eulogy of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (*logos* 6 of c. 1305)³⁸ is the very first scholarly appreciation of this Church Father and the first biographical sketch based on an intelligent use of several of the best extant sources: Gregory's autobiographical

³³ *Ibid.*, n. 166 (on p. 41).

³⁴ Ševčenko, *ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁵ Gigante (1981), ref. II.2, p. 243.

³⁶ H. G. Beck (1952), ref. I.2, p. 75.

³⁷ I. Ševčenko ref. I.9 (1975), p. 40.

³⁸ Ševčenko (1984), ref. II.6, p. 149 and his recent article "The *Logos* on Gregory of Nazianzus by Theodore Metochites" in W. Seibt (ed.), *Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit*... (Vienna, 1996), pp. 221–35.

poem, his funeral oration on St. Basil and an eight-century 'Life' by Gregory the Presbyter. The sensible and sober 'Eulogy' by Metochites includes assessments of the saint as a writer of poetry and prose, a wise discussion of his writings during the pagan reaction under Emperor Julian (361–63)³⁹ and extensive information on heresies prevalent in the fourth century, which St. Gregory was combating. Metochites' 'Eulogy' is greatly superior to earlier and contemporary Byzantine panegyrics on St. Gregory. Furthermore, when both Metochites and a modern scholar (P. Gallay in 1943) used the same sources, Metochites' treatment compares favourably with Gallay's account. Metochites' own poetry shows clear traces of the influence of St. Gregory's poems in their metres as well as their autobiographical content.

Metochites was proud of Byzantine civilization because it embodied ancient Greek culture. On occasion he called the Byzantines 'Hellenes' rather than 'Romans'.⁴⁰ Continuity between ancient Greece and his own time was of the utmost importance to him.

His writings exhibit originality and critical independence, refreshingly novel in a Byzantine writer. Thus, his reflections on the development of the ancient Greeks' philosophy "showed a sense of historical perspective". He spoke of the limitations of Greek philosophy in the time of Socrates when it

had not yet differentiated itself into its diverse branches nor had it coped with many problems concerning Nature. As a harmoniously constructed system it dated only from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

He regarded the ancient philosophical writings on politics as purely theoretical. As an experienced statesman, he viewed this part of ancient philosophy as quite impracticable and here singled out Plato for explicit criticism (*logos* 10).⁴¹

His capacity to produce studies of such critical independence⁴² reached its climax in the last decade of his life and, especially, after 1330. The disasters of his last years contributed to the critical maturity of his final reflections. While he had

³⁹ Cf. V. Criscuolo, "Gregorio di Nazianzo e Giuliano" in *Talarischos. Studia Graeca Antonio Garzya sexagenario a discipulis oblata* (Naples, 1987), pp. 165–208.

⁴⁰ Ševčenko ref. I.9 (1975), p. 46 and n. 203.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–47.

⁴² Cf. H. G. Beck (1952), ref. I.2, pp. 72–74; Gigante (1981), ref. II.2, no. VIII: "Teodoro Metochites critico letterario".

inherited the belief that the Byzantine Empire was co-eternal with the world . . . yet he was the first Byzantine intellectual on record to regard the Empire as just another political entity and to envision its impending collapse as just another manifestation of the universal law of creation and decay.⁴³

The essay on Plutarch (no. 71 of the *Miscellanea*) was regarded by Metochites as one of his most important writings.⁴⁴ He virtually ignored Plutarch's "Parallel Lives" and confined his comments to what are known as his 'Moralia'. It is the first known attempt at a fairly comprehensive and critical study of this part of Plutarch's literary legacy. Metochites fully appreciated that he was dealing with one of the most graceful and urbane of the ancient Greek authors (cf. above section III of chapter 12). Metochites regarded Plutarch as an embodiment of universal learning. We do not today have such an exaggerated opinion of his scholarship, but many of Metochites' comments are eminently sensible. He emphasized that Plutarch was eclectic in selecting what he deemed to be best from most ancient philosophical doctrines, except for the rejection of the Epicureans. Unusually for a Byzantine commentator, he accepted that Plutarch was less interested in perfection of style than in the content of what he had to say. He found admirable Plutarch's high moral tone. A few of the Plutarchian essays that Metochites regarded as particularly important we do not now ascribe to Plutarch, notably the "Life of Homer", but here he was merely sharing the accepted beliefs of his Byzantine contemporaries (the "Life of Homer" is no. 54 of the Planudean edition).⁴⁵

Two essays in the *Miscellanea*, on Synesios of Cyrene (no. 18), one of his greatest loves among the Greek authors,⁴⁶ and Dio 'Chrysostom' (no. 19) likewise deserve extended comment. Metochites appreciated how much Synesios owed to Dio. His discussion anticipates admirably what modern scholars say about them.⁴⁷

Synesios of Cyrene (c. 370–c. 413) is a sophisticated and an attractive figure. He was a student of Neoplatonic philosophy and mathematics at Alexandria. He was also an accomplished rhetorician. As

⁴³ Ševčenko (1984), ref. II.6, p. 149.

⁴⁴ L. Tartaglia, "Il Saggio su Plutarca di Metochita" in *Talarischos* (see n. 39 above), pp. 339–62.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 360 and notes 67–69.

⁴⁶ H. Hunger (1952), ref. I.4, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Gigante (1969), ref. II.1, p. 11.

a descendant of a Greek aristocratic family, he became in his last years the bishop of Ptolemais in his native Cyrenaica. Though a large part of his writings gives no inkling of it, he was probably always a Christian. He was an amused and ironic observer of Byzantine government and society.⁴⁸ His surviving 156 letters were regarded as models of Attic Greek and contain his most charming writings.⁴⁹

He left a varied literary legacy. From the ninth century onwards, in every succeeding generation, it captivated an elite of Byzantine readers. Planudes was an attentive student of his letters, as is shown not only by a selection of excerpts from them in his *Collectanea* (above, section VI of chapter 12), but by marginal *scholia* in a number of *codices* containing the letters of Synesios.⁵⁰

Synesios regarded philosophy as the supreme attainment of the human intellect. His writings show familiarity with Plato, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists, though they do not reveal any coherent philosophical doctrine.⁵¹ Dio was a man who appealed immensely to Synesios as an aristocrat who "had popularised philosophy by his charm as a writer and speaker". Dio's battle was for Synesios "a battle in defence of the Greek mode of life".⁵²

To Metochites, who had an exaggerated estimation of the philosophical content of the writings of Synesios, this late Hellene of Cyrene was "one of the few philosophers who show a concern for style".⁵³ Metochites admired his passionate defence of the high Greek culture and of the traditional education that created it. He chose perfectly when he combined his studies of Dio and Synesios.⁵⁴ He

⁴⁸ There are excellent accounts of him by H. I. Marrou, "Synesius of Cyrene and Alexandrian Neoplatonism" in A. Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 126–50 and C. Lacombrade (ed.), introduction to his edition of *Synesios de Cyrène*, I, *Hymnes* (Paris, Budé coll., 1978), pp. v–XLIV.

⁴⁹ The best edition is by A. Garzya (Naples, 1979). Garzya's preparatory studies are collected in the *Variorum* edition of his papers, *Storia e Interpretazione di Testi Bizantini. Saggi e Ricerche* (London, 1974), nos. XXI–XXVIII.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (1974), no. XXIII, especially p. 215.

⁵¹ Marrou, *loc. cit.* (1963), p. 131, speaks of him as merely "one of those rhetoricians with some knowledge of philosophy". What can be said of him as a 'philosopher' is assembled by V. Valdenberg in *Byzantion*, 4 (1927–28).

⁵² A. Momigliano, "Dio Chrysostomus" in his *Quarto Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico* (Rome, 1969), p. 268.

⁵³ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.14, p. 262.

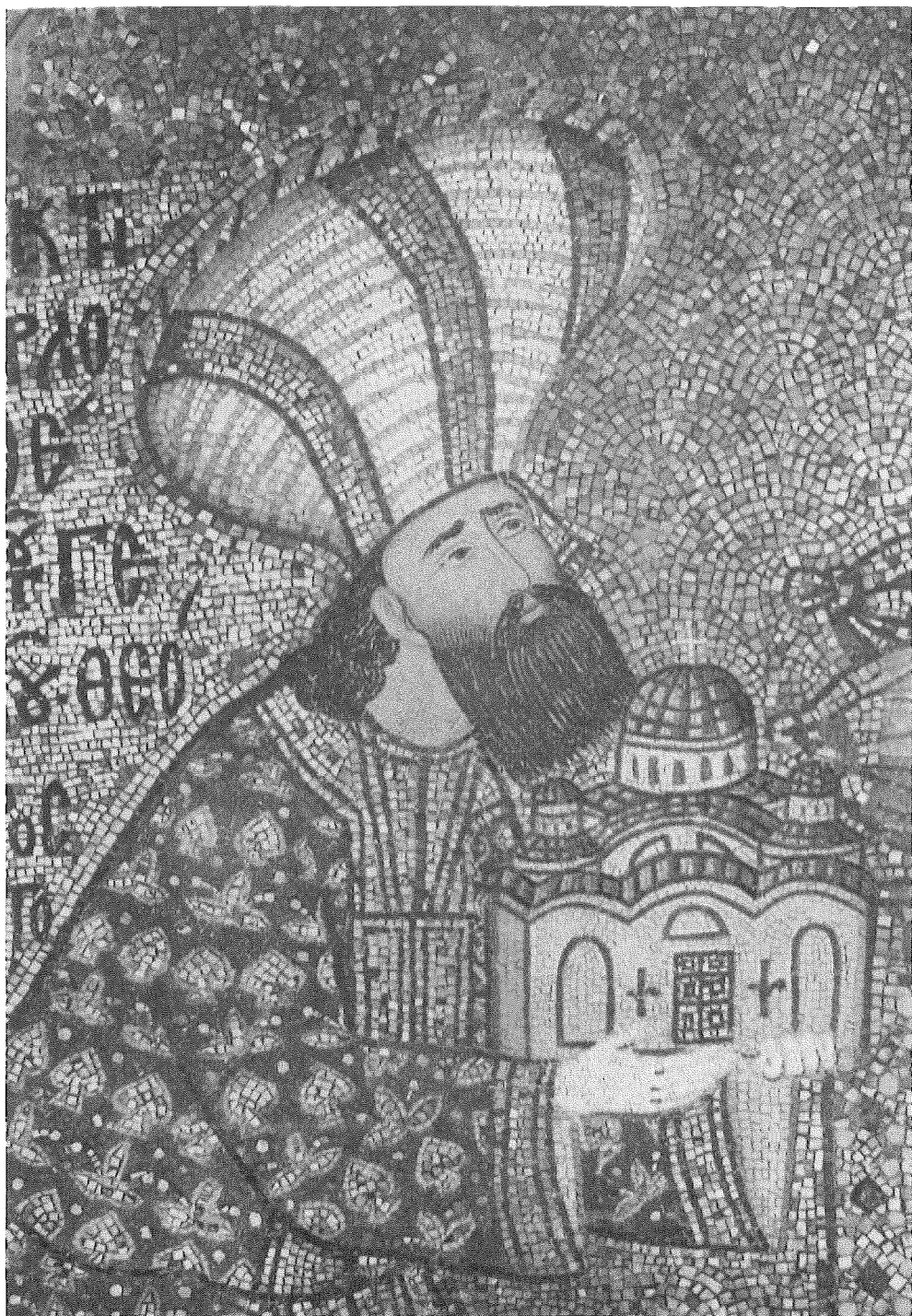
⁵⁴ There is an English translation of the essay of Synesios on Dio by A. Fitzgerald, *The Essays and Hymns of Synesios of Cyrene* (London, 1930), pp. 148–82 (text) and 211–241 (notes).

PLATES

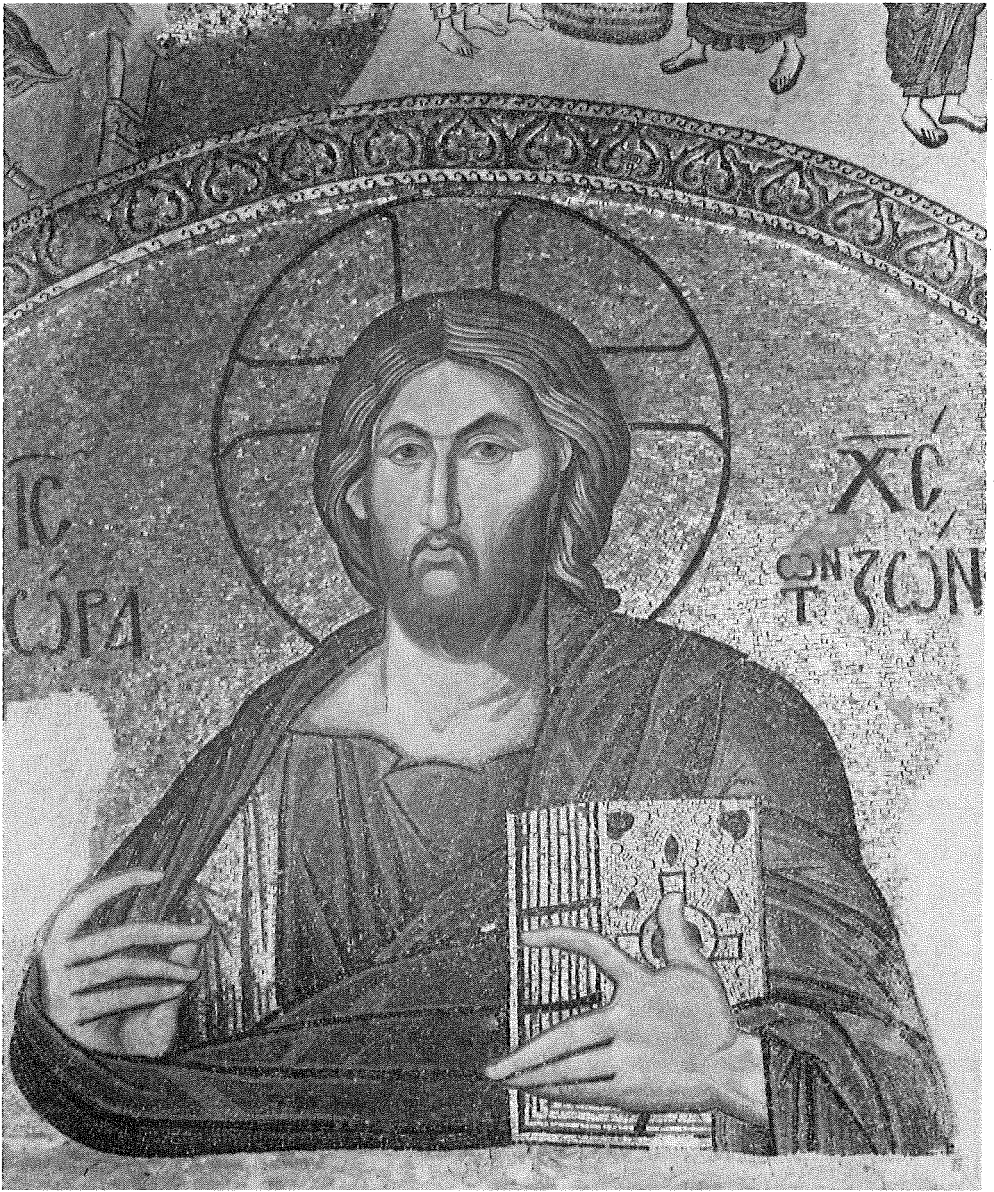
Plates 1-9 are taken from *The Kariye Djami*, by Paul A. Underwood (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1966): Plate 1 from Vol. I; Plates 2-6 from Vol. II; Plates 7-9 from Vol. III.



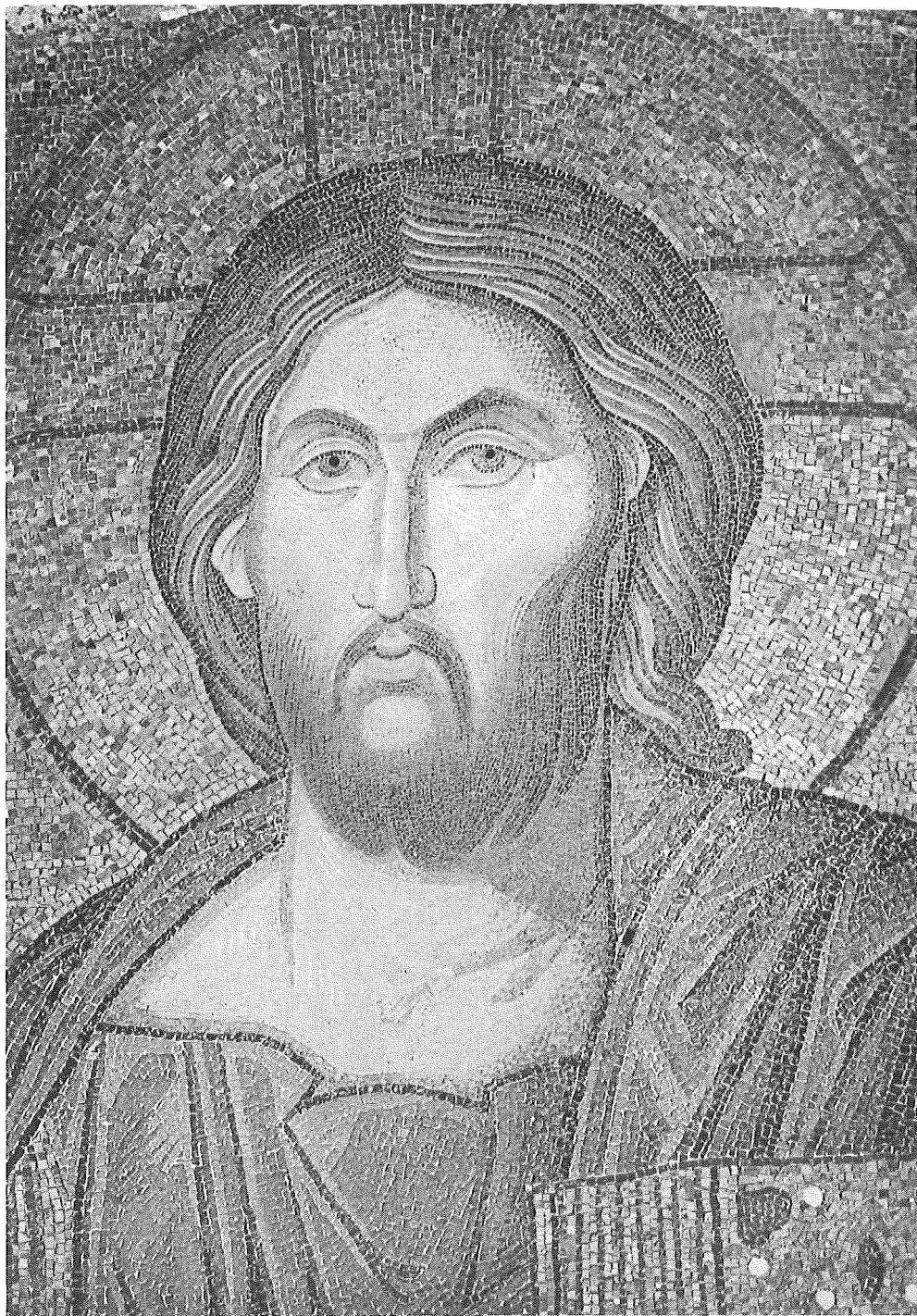
1a. Theodore Metochites, rebuilder of the church of Chora presenting it to Christ.



1b. Theodore Metochites, founder of the Monastery of Chora. Detail.



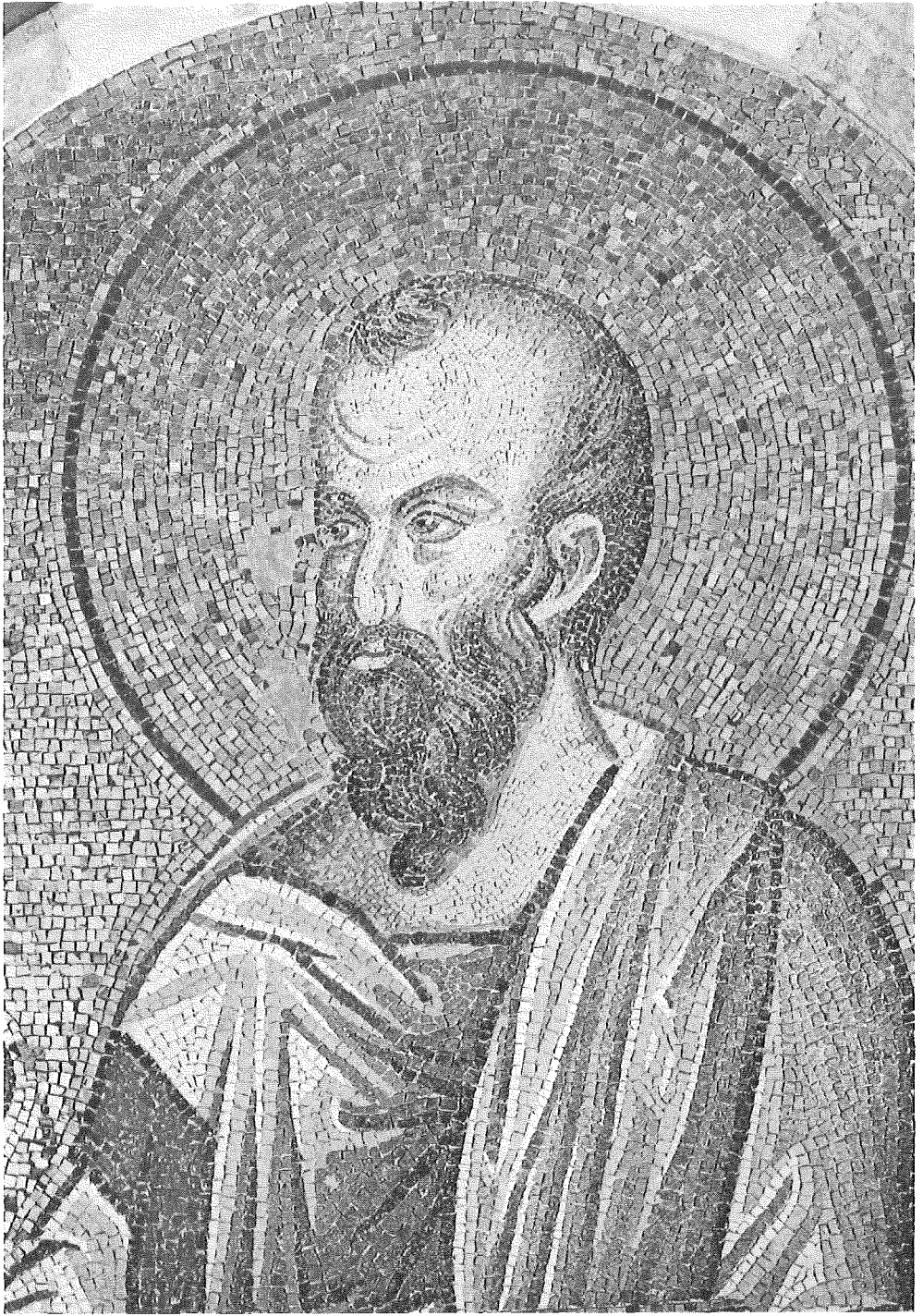
2a. Christ Pantocrator. Detail.



2b. Christ Pantocrator. Detail: head.



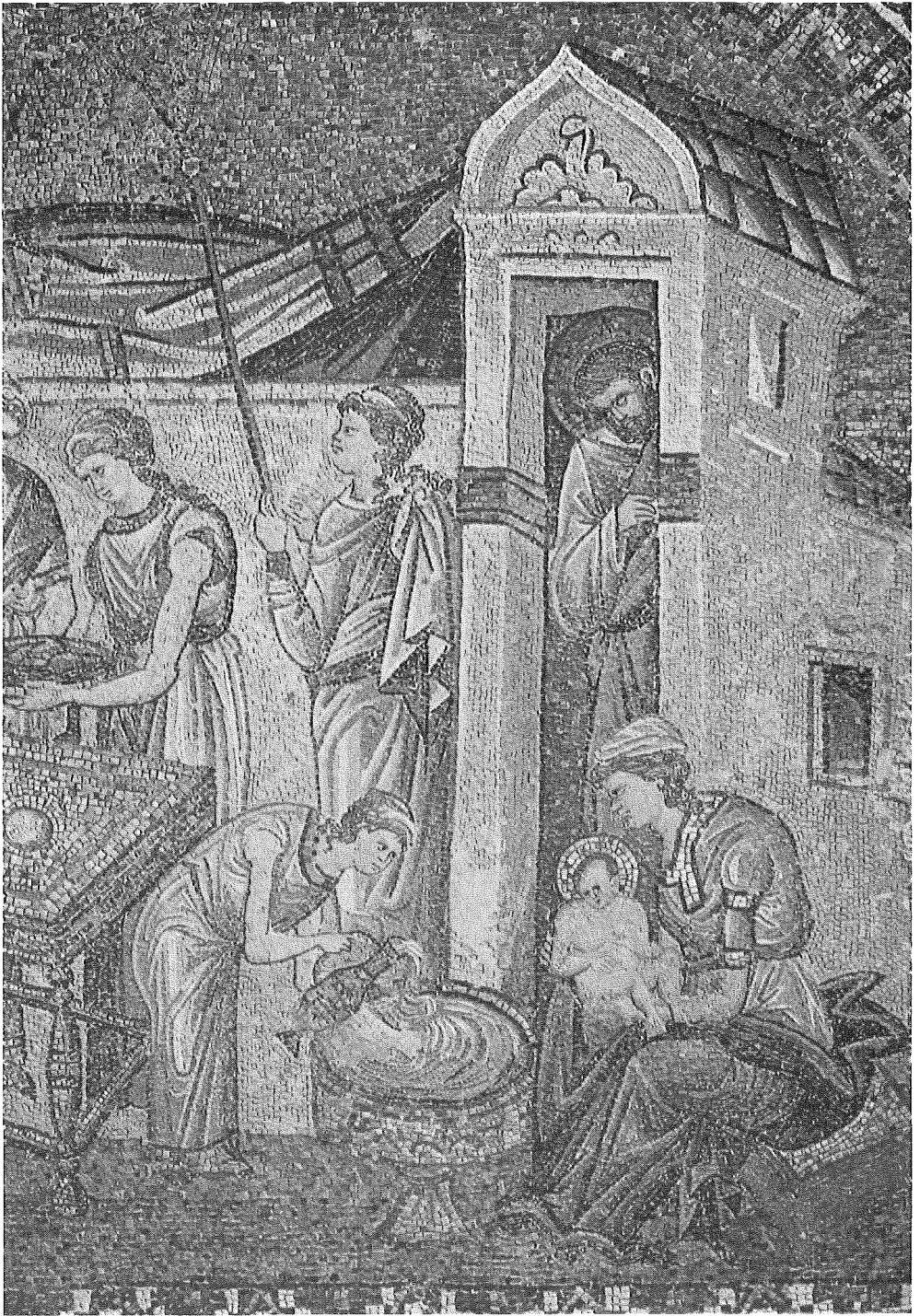
3a. St. Peter. Detail: half-figure.



3b. St. Paul. Detail: bust.



4a. The Birth of the Virgin.



4b. The Birth of the Virgin. Detail: preparation of the bath



4c. The Enrolment for Taxation.



4d. The Enrolment for Taxation. Detail: the scribe, the officer, and Mary.



4e. The Annunciation to the Virgin at the Well. Detail: Mary and the angel.



4f. Flight to Egypt.



4g. Flight to Egypt. The outer narthex. Looking north.



4h. The Dormition of the Virgin.



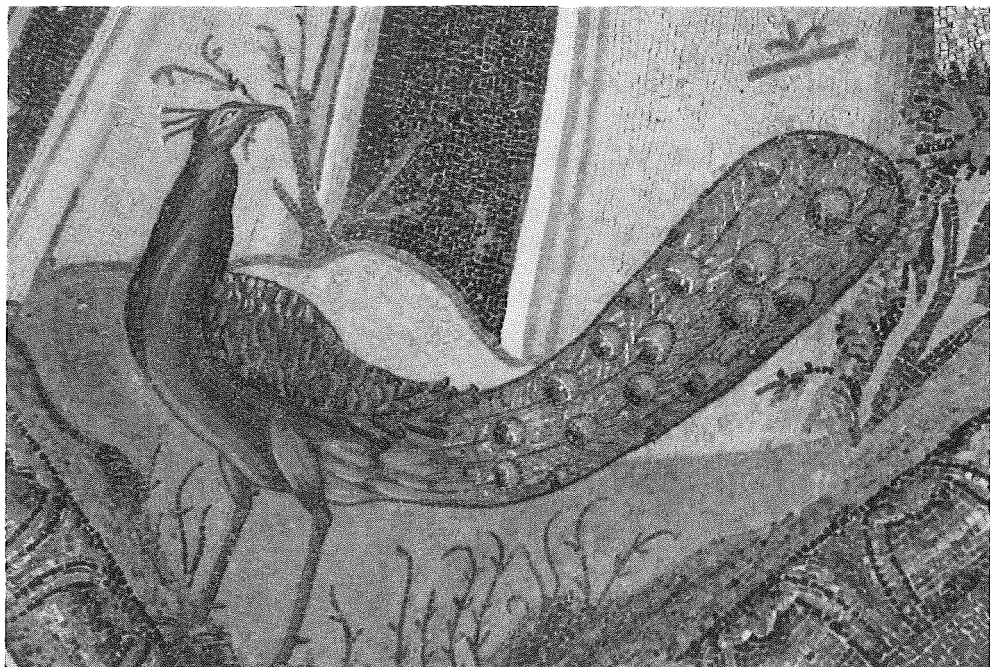
4i. The Dormition of the Virgin.



5a. The Temptation of Christ. Detail: the stones and the kingdoms.



5b. The Temptation of Christ. The outer narthex. Looking south.



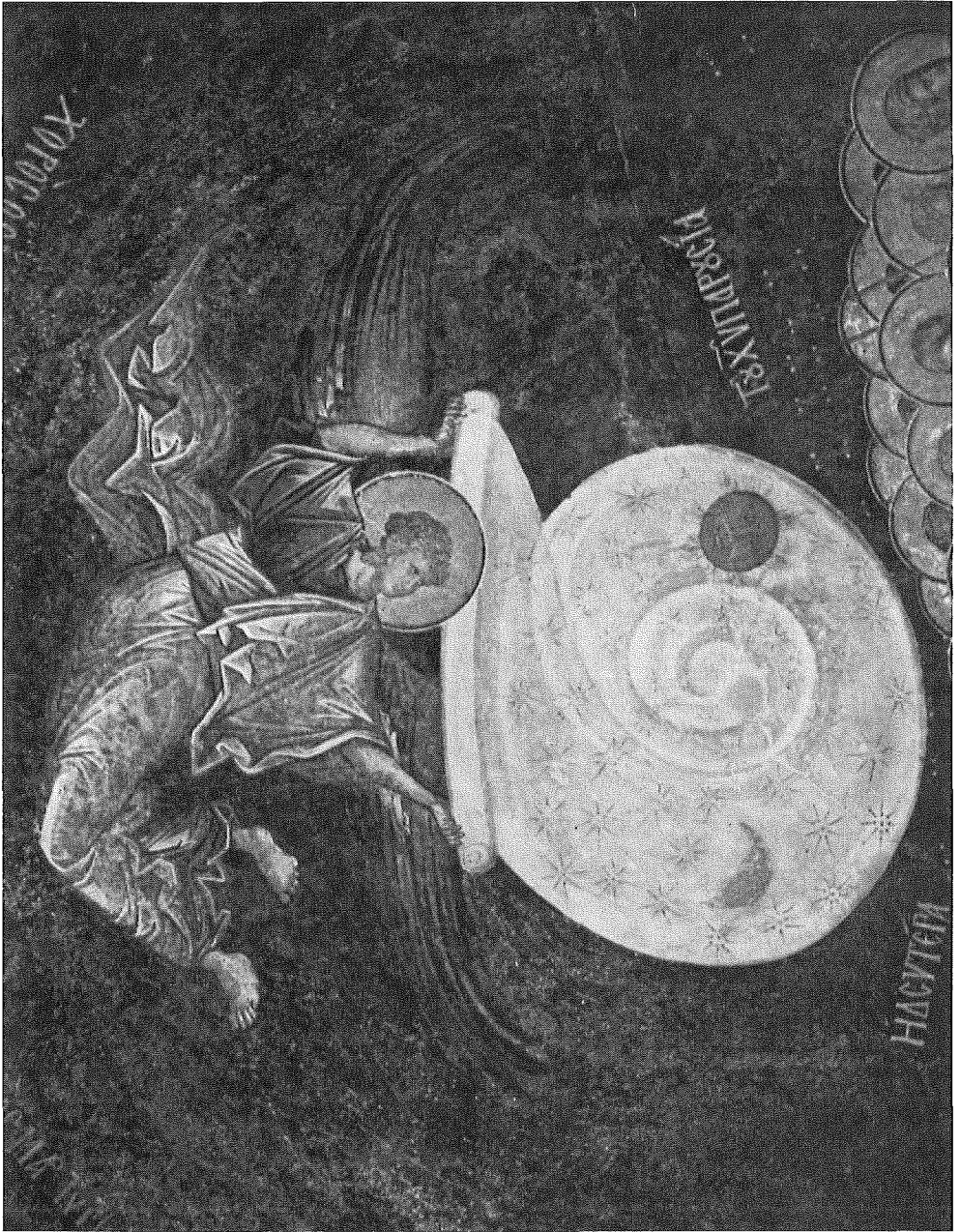
6. Decorative detail.



7a. The Virgin and Child, medaillon of the dome (traditional image).



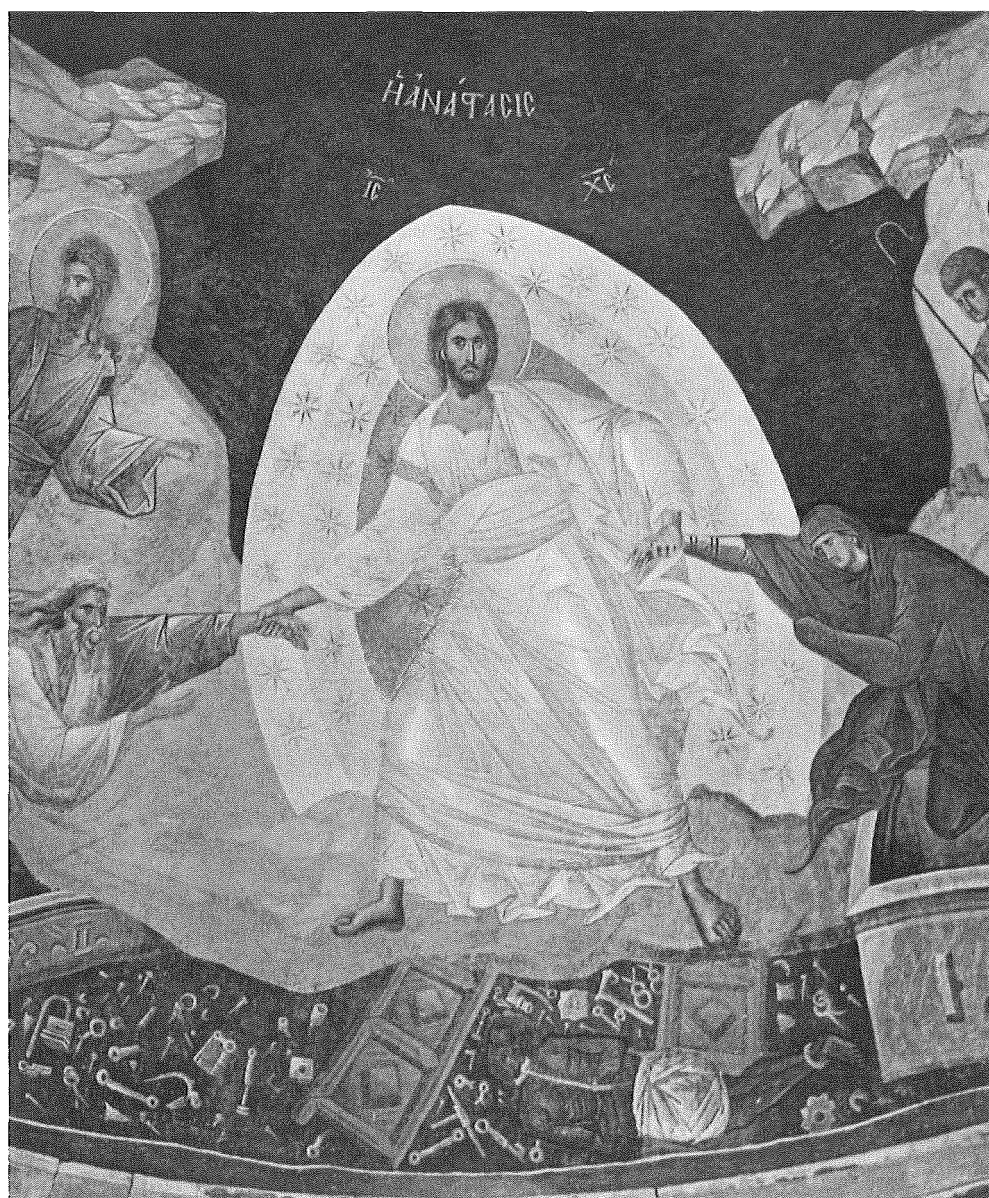
7b. The Loving Virgin (style of 13th and 14th centuries).



8. Angel rolling back the Scroll of Heaven
(including Sun, Stars and Moon).



9a. The Anastasis.



9b. The Anastasis. Detail.

may also have read letter 154 to Hypatīa: "Some . . . have maintained that I am faithless to philosophy because I profess grace and harmony of style".⁵⁵

Synesios' mastery of an enormous range of Greek literature, including works no longer extant in Byzantium, like some of Dio's lost writings.

One of the most original writings of Metochites was his 17th *logos*, comparing Demosthenes (c. 384–322 B.C.) A.D.)

Metochites regarded democratic republics as deplorable regimes,⁵⁷ appreciated that the roots of the greatness of Demosthenes lay in his passionate oratorical defence of Athenian democracy against Philip of Macedonia. He wrote:

Demosthenes lived in a time of equal political rights and freedom, active in politics, devoted to freedom . . . ever ready to expose himself to any danger in the interests of his country and fellow citizens . . . He used his oratory to give a true account of the situation, as was necessary and yet not without danger, not employing eloquence as declamation.

In oratorical skill Demosthenes and Aristides were fully comparable and never equalled by anyone else. But Aristides "living under the absolute monarchy of the empire, the government of the Roman Caesars", could choose

to live for himself, for the Graces of rhetoric and the audiences at his displays . . . Given that he lived in conditions like ours

he was the best model for the Byzantine oratory of Metochites' kind of society.⁵⁸

For Metochites, Greek antiquity was much more than a subject for learned curiosity. Its legacy was a living source of his own existence and thoughts. Hence his impressive efforts to achieve an authentic historical understanding of aspects of the ancient civilization. The thoughts of the ancient Greek philosophers helped him to express his own reflections on life.⁵⁹

traditions in finding good things in Epicurus. He thought that the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁵⁶ Edited by Gigante (1969), ref. II.1. A summary in Gigante (1981), ref. II.2, no. VIII, pp. 176–96.

⁵⁷ E. Barker (1957), ref. I.1, pp. 174–77.

⁵⁸ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.14, pp. 260–62.

⁵⁹ Ševčenko, ref. I.9 (1975), p. 45 and n. 196.

teachings of this much maligned philosopher “were not altogether unreasonable, since all men strove after pleasure and the enjoyment of more sublimated pleasures was admissible and lawful”. Nearing his own end, he echoed Epicurus (whom he cited from St. Maximos of the 7th century A.D.) in confessing that human beings are like fortresses bereft of defences in the face of death.⁶⁰

IV

This cannot be a book about Byzantine art, but no account of Metochites can omit his partial rebuilding and superb redecoration of the church of St. Saviour and the Virgin attached to the monastery of Chora (now Kariye Djami) at Constantinople. It is one of the greatest monuments of Byzantine art.⁶¹ Very few examples of large-scale decorative mosaics and frescoes of the early Palaeologan period survive today and Chora’s mosaics are now the last known attempt at a monumental scheme executed in this artistic medium at Constantinople.

Metochites was a collector of ancient artistic objects⁶² and motifs derived from the arts of antiquity recur in Chora’s mosaics and frescoes. In his writings he proudly mentions a leading decorator of churches at Constantinople, Eulalios (mid-twelfth century), alongside the greatest Greek masters of antiquity (*logos* 70).⁶³ The mosaics and frescoes commissioned by him at Chora reveal a man of refined taste.

Chora is about one kilometre to the south-east of the palace of Blachernai, the chief residence of Metochites’ imperial master, Andronikos II. It was very near to Metochites’ own splendid palace. The church went back to the late twelfth century.⁶⁴ As Metochites tells us in his poem no. 1 (poem A),⁶⁵ it was in a parlous condition when he rebuilt and redecorated it, probably between 1315 and

⁶⁰ Gigante (1981), ref. II.2, no. X, p. 239.

⁶¹ I visited it in September 1996 and it is one of my most memorable artistic experiences.

⁶² O. Demus in Underwood (1975), ref. IV.4, vol. IV, p. 157.

⁶³ I. Ševčenko, *ibid.*, pp. 50–51 and notes 227–28.

⁶⁴ Its history before the restoration by Metochites is summarized in Underwood (1966), ref. IV.4, vol. I, pp. 3–13.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

1321.⁶⁶ Recent excavations have revealed that his rebuilding was even more extensive than he claimed. The large dome, either because it had been damaged by earthquakes or otherwise undermined, needed to be entirely rebuilt. He added as new edifices a second, outer narthex and a funerary chapel of the Parekklesion.⁶⁷ All his new decorations were in mosaics, except the Parekklesion, decorated in frescoes which were probably the last to be completed.

Both frescoes and mosaics show affinities and the artists responsible for them must have collaborated closely. The iconography of all the decoration was very conservative and studiously orthodox. As the son of the pro-Unionist George, kept imprisoned during most of the reign of Andronikos II, Theodore Metochites always carefully shunned theological controversy and the orthodoxy of his commissions at Chora formed part of his wary avoidance of anything that might attract religious censure.⁶⁸

In the new outer narthex Metochites commissioned a mosaic of himself presenting Chora to Christ (plates 1a–1b) and, furthermore, the portraits of two previous benefactors of Chora, Isaak, son of the emperor Alexios I and Melane, an illegitimate half-sister of Andronikos II. Artistically they are among the most conservative images in Chora. The other mosaics include cycles of the Infancy of Christ, the Ministry of Christ (plates 5a–5b) and the Life of the Virgin Mary (plates 4a–4i), besides the figures of various Saints (plates 3a–3b). The frescoes of the Parekklesion are dedicated partly to the Virgin, but also include some key images of Christian theology.⁶⁹

The decoration of Chora (both mosaics and frescoes) was based on a variety of models, combining several traditions of Byzantine art. Thus, in the Parekklesion, a stiff, hieratic image of the Virgin holding the infant Jesus, reproducing the early Byzantine icons of the Mother of God (plate 7a), coexists with a figure of a loving Mary holding her child affectionately (plate 7b). The formal, usual “omnipotent Christ” of the inner narthex (plates 2a–2b) contrasts with the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (1975), vol. IV, pp. 90–91 (Ševčenko).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (1966), vol. I, pp. 17–24.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (1975), vol. IV, pp. 51–55 (Ševčenko).

⁶⁹ The discussion of the decoration and its iconography that follows is based on Underwood, ref. IV.4. Vol. I contains a general summary, vol. II covers the mosaics and vol. III the frescoes. There are also important articles on various features of the decoration in vol. IV. See also the other works listed in section IV of the references to this chapter.

heroic, magnificent Christ rescuing Adam and Eve in the apse of the Parekklesion (plates 9a–9b).

The bulk of the images represent the new art of the Palaeologan period at its most refined. It was an art aiming at a humanized, tender presentation of Christ and the Virgin. An earlier monumental example of it is to be seen in the Christ, Virgin and St. John the Baptist in the mosaic of the *Deesis* in the southern gallery of St. Sophia, commissioned by Michael VIII to celebrate his recovery of Constantinople.⁷⁰ The Metochitean programme at Chora constitutes the largest known assemblage of this more humane imagery in a Constantinopolitan church. It was a blend of religious and secular Byzantine decorative traditions, “perhaps the first synthesis of this kind in Byzantine art”.⁷¹

Only a few examples from Chora can be cited here. In depictions of the events in the Lives of the Virgin and Christ there are many more figures than in the older treatments of the same scenes and there is a new emphasis on their individual personalities and on the differing expressions of their emotions. The mosaic of the Death of the Virgin is a moving example of this (plates 4h–4i). There is a desire here to produce realistic human narratives, as also in the mosaic of the Virgin and Joseph appearing before tax officials for the census (plates 4c–4d). In the words of D. Talbot Rice

The background is decorative and picturesque, and numerous figures are included in the scene; the story is illustrated clearly and vividly and the gestures are wonderfully expressive; look, for example, at the busy clerk, the bored officer who indicates with his sword the place where the timorous figure of the Virgin should stand, or at Joseph, so anxious lest his wife should not acquit herself to good advantage.⁷²

There are some splendid studies of movement. The mosaic of the Annunciation shows a marvellously foreshortened Angel startling the Virgin, who turns away from him (plate 4e). But the most superb images of movement are in the frescoes of the Parekklesion.

In the composition of the Second Coming one of the most beautiful details is that of the angel in flight . . . rolling back the scroll of heaven, which contains the sun, the moon and the stars⁷³ (plate 8).

⁷⁰ O. Demus (1975), *ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 144–45 and figs. 19–21 of his article.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 143.

⁷² D. Talbot Rice (1973), ref. IV.3, no. VIII, p. 8.

⁷³ J. Beckwith (1968), ref. II.1, p. 142.

The apse consists of a tremendous image, over 4m. in length, of a heroic Christ rescuing Adam and Eve from Hell. Its colours are of dazzling beauty, the white of Christ's robe contrasting with the blue background and the wide range of coloured dresses of other figures (plates 9a–9b).

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3. D. Talbot Rice, "The twelfth-century Renaissance in Byzantine art", no. VIII in his *Byzantine Art and its Influences* (London, 1973).
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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SCIENCE: ASTRONOMY, MATHEMATICS, MEDICINE

I

From the ninth century to the collapse of the Byzantine state in the middle of the fifteenth century the Byzantines were chiefly intent on merely preserving ancient Greek mathematical, astronomical and medical writings and commenting upon them. This militated against much independent scientific inquiry, though not entirely.

Certain general features of the Greek scientific legacy must be highlighted at the outset. They help to explain the Byzantine pre-occupation with preserving rather than innovating. Greek scientists were normally adherents of one or another of the philosophical schools. Even if they eclectically combined several doctrines (as did Ptolemy and Galen in the second century A.D.), their writings were dominated by general assumptions derived from philosophy. That meant that their learning was a reflection of a search for universally valid laws. The small Byzantine elite which cultivated this scholarship was steeped in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical writings. They accepted the Greek scientific legacy as a body of authoritative, general systems, which were very impressive because of their comprehensiveness and which could not be fundamentally modified.

Much of the scientific learning which particularly mattered to the Byzantine cultivators of the sciences during the early Palaeologan Renaissance was the product of deliberate attempts in the second century A.D. to systematically organize scientific knowledge into authoritative summaries. This was specially true of the geographic and astronomical writings of Ptolemy and the medical legacy of Galen. George Pachymeres, Maximos Planudes, Manuel Bryennios, Theodore Metochites and John Zacharias were the leading scholars, acquainted with each other, engaged in bringing into fuller circulation and supplementing these two writers.¹

¹ These introductory remarks on the legacy of ancient Greek science are particularly indebted to L. Edelstein, *Ancient Medicine* (ed. O. Temkin and C. L. Temkin, 2nd ed., Baltimore, 1987) and *La Scienza Ellenistica* (1984, as in ref. III.11).

In his review of L. Bréhier's remarkable volume on "Byzantine Civilization" Paul Lemerle remarked that the section on the sciences (some 10 pages) did not amount to much.² Nor does a corresponding chapter by K. Vogel in the new edition of volume 4 (on Byzantium) of the *Cambridge Medieval History*.³ However, the contribution of these scholars to the 'salvaging' of the ancient scientific legacy is important. All the surviving writings of Ptolemy (c. 100–178 A.D.) on geography, astronomy and musical harmonics were brought back into much fuller circulation. In mathematics this was true of Diophantos, the earliest surviving Greek exponent of algebra (3rd century A.D.). Our two vitally important textual witnesses to the mathematics of Archimedes (3rd century B.C.) were found not in Byzantium but in Italy. However, their fairly faithful, literal translations into Latin by William of Moerbeke in 1269⁴ are connected with Byzantine scholarship, as he resided at Nicaea for some time around 1260⁵ (chapter 7). He may have known some of the leading scholars of the Nicæan Empire.

In the preface to his *Quadrivium* George Pachymeres (above, chapter 15) explained that the study of the sciences (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy in that treatise) is of natural interest to educated men, as they help to exercise their intelligence.⁶ This can serve as the best introduction to a series of impressive attempts in the century after 1261 to preserve better the ancient Greek scientific legacy. We know the names of at least a dozen scholars well-versed in mathematics and astronomy during the reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II, but only some of their most important publications can be discussed here.

There were also some new developments. The Indian system of numerical notation, including the use of zero, had been available to a few Byzantines before 1261, but became better known thereafter. There also began a belated assimilation of Arabic and Persian astronomical learning. Admittedly, one major incentive for this was the widespread belief in some kinds of astrology. Andronikos II had an obsessive trust in it. But this was a pseudo-science, which I shall on

² P. Lemerle, "La civilisation byzantine", *Journal des Savants* (1950), p. 136, in reviewing L. Bréhier, *Le Monde Byzantin*, III, *La Civilisation Byzantine* (Paris, 1950).

³ "Byzantine science", *Cambridge Medieval History*, 4, pt. 2 (1967), pp. 264–305.

⁴ J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (1989), ref. I.1, p. 213.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶ P. Tannery (1940), ref. I.6 (introduction of V. Laurent), p. xx.

the whole avoid discussing, because it often served obviously political purposes and was manipulated cynically to produce the desired forecasts.⁷ Some of the most distinguished Byzantines, especially churchmen, refused to accept it and I shall mention (section IV) some writers who vigorously denounced it. In medicine there was some notable new writing based on clinical experience and Arabic learning. There were also valid criticisms of the established doctrines.

Besides looking at the writings of identifiable scholars, one should also notice some of the mostly anonymous manuscripts produced at this time. They include *codices* with particularly rich scientific content, especially in astronomy and mathematics, obviously produced for some very learned people. A selection of the most remarkable of these manuscripts increases our appreciation of the scientific interests of a small Palaeologan elite.

II

George Pachymeres (1242–1310) and Maximos Planudes (1255–1305) both taught mathematics at Constantinople at the same time. They must have been acquainted, but do not cite each other in their mathematical writings. They studied some of the same texts (notably Diophantos). The principal scientific publication of Pachymeres, the *Quadrivium* (*Tetrabiblos*)⁸ came to be widely used as a textbook and there are several manuscripts of it, while the mathematical publications of Planudes survive only in very few *codices*.

The *Quadrivium*, a textbook dealing with the four scientific disciplines of higher education (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy), is a witness to the adoption by Byzantines of the western, Latin scheme of the seven liberal arts that went back to Martianus Capella (5th century A.D.). In the treatise of Pachymeres the most important are the mathematical sections. It provides the best extant summary of Byzantine mathematical learning, especially in its knowledge of many of the ancient Greek works. Among its few original insights are some in the treatment of Diophantos.⁹

The dominant current the ancient Greek mathematics was its

⁷ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 452–53.

⁸ Ref. I.6 (1940), introduction of V. Laurent, pp. xxviii–xxxiii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. xxxi–xxxiii. For ancient mathematicians known to him see C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, p. 157.

geometrization, the prevalence of geometrical studies and proofs. Among the surviving Greek writings the *Arithmetica* of Diophantos of Alexandria (third century A.D.)¹⁰ is one of the rare, important exceptions. It is the first surviving ancient treatise entirely devoted to algebra and the theory of numbers. It incorporated similar (otherwise lost) earlier Greek writings. Without it we would not even suspect that such writings had existed. Diophantos was not interested in abstract discussions, but confined himself entirely to practical problems, which he treated with brilliant sophistication.¹¹

Planudes' edition of books 1 and 2 of Diophantos (out of the extant 6), with a systematic commentary in the margins,¹² was his most distinguished mathematical enterprise, following on a number of more elementary works.

The tradition of the text used by him is inferior to the best versions. He copied some corrupt readings, but he introduced occasionally what he regarded as essential emendations.¹³ The textual shortcomings must not overshadow the merits of this edition. His commentary reveals an acute grasp of mathematical problems. It is also very helpful. For example, in the initial section, consisting of definitions by Diophantos of the symbols he was using, Planudes provides a correct explanation of them (e.g. for squares and cubes, used in equations).¹⁴

An autograph fragment of his edition and commentary (10 folios) survives in a very damaged Milanese ms. Ambr. Et. 157 sup. (gr. 780), dating from 1292–93. Fortunately, we have an almost contemporary copy of the entire Planudean autograph, before it had become damaged (Venetian ms. Marcianus. gr. 308, fos. 50v–263r).¹⁵

A treatise on elementary arithmetical operations may have been composed by Planudes earlier (before 1292–93). It has been edited by A. Allard under the title (in French translation) of “Le Grand Calcul selon les Indiens”.¹⁶ The most interesting feature is his use of the new Indian arithmetical notation, consisting of Arabic numerals

¹⁰ P. Tannery (1912), ref. II.8, vol. I, p. 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 357–58. See also Sir T. L. Heath (1910), ref. II.5 and K. Vogel (1971), ref. II.9.

¹² Edited by P. Tannery, ref. II.7, vol. II (1895), pp. 125–255.

¹³ A. Allard (1982–83), ref. II.3, pp. 76, 95–6.

¹⁴ P. Tannery, ref. II.7, vol. II (1895), p. 125.

¹⁵ A. Allard (1979), ref. II.2a and ref. II.3 (1982–83), pp. 59, 61–2.

¹⁶ Ref. II.2a (1979) and ref. II.2b (1981). His edition is based on Planudes' autograph in the Milanese ms. (cf. 2a).

and a zero. The great innovation lay not in the use of these numerals (found in some earlier scientific Byzantine texts) but in the use of zero "in what is termed place notation". As in our modern usage, the position of a zero in a number determines its value.¹⁷

Planudes used the Indian numerals in an oriental form, which he may have derived from his contemporary Gregory Choniades, who had studied astronomy at Tabris and was using the same eastern forms of the Indian numerals (see below section IV). Planudes did not have much influence here, as the Indian numerals were "not generally adopted by the mathematicians of the late Byzantine period".¹⁸

Another original feature of the Planudean treatise lay in his description of an improved method of extracting the square roots of numbers.¹⁹ He is known to have lectured also on Euclid's *Elements* (to judge by the notes of one of his pupils).²⁰

III

There are numerous manuscripts dating certainly, or probably, from the reign of Andronikos II, containing scientific works (on astronomy, geography, mathematics and harmonics). I have mentioned several of them connected with Planudes. A selection of a couple of others will help to illustrate the high quality of this revival of scientific interests.

Ms.Laur.28.1 is usually dated around 1300. Later in the fourteenth century it belonged to Demetrios Kydones (1324–c. 1398), a leading Byzantine statesman, as well as a learned scholar. He probably acquired it from a collection of some other notable and its contents certainly attest that it must have been commissioned by some learned patron.²¹

Its first owner wished to have copies of all the astronomical works

¹⁷ N. G. Wilson, "Miscellanea Paleographica", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 22 (1981), p. 400. I owe thanks to Dr Wilson for a copy of his article.

¹⁸ D. Pingree, "Planudes, Maximus", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 11 (1975), p. 18; N. G. Wilson, *cit. supra* (1981), p. 401.

¹⁹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, p. 417 and n. 17 on p. 466.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 417 and n. 17^a on p. 466, citing Sir T. L. Heath (1926), ref. II.6, vol. I, p. 72.

²¹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 422–23, 426–29, 436–37, 460.

of Ptolemy (c. 100–178 A.D.), but not the astrological ones, together with connected treatises by other writers. In ms.Laur.28.1 they derive ultimately from ms.Vat.gr.1594 (9th century), the earliest known minuscule ms. of Ptolemaic works, through the intermediary of ms.Par.gr. 2390 (13th century). The astronomical treatises included Ptolemy's principal work, the *Great Mathematical Collection* (*Megale Mathematike Syntaxis* in its original title), which in the Arabic and western Latin tradition came to be called the *Almagest*, of c. 150 A.D. (see below, section IV). Furthermore, ms.Laur.28.1 derived from the same source Ptolemy's subsidiary astronomical treatises, the *Planetary Hypotheses*, on the five planets known to the Greeks (see *ibid.*) and on the *Phases of the Fixed Stars*. Ms.28.1 likewise contains Ptolemy's own introduction to his astronomical tables, nowadays called the *Handy Tables* and his one short philosophical treatise, *On the Faculties of Judgement and Command*. Related astronomical works by others, derived ultimately from Vat.gr. 1594, include an introduction to Ptolemy's *Mathematical Collection*, probably written around 500 A.D. by Eutokios of Askalon,²² a commentary on the first two books of the same Ptolemaic work by Theon, an Alexandrian scholar of the fourth century A.D., and a commentary, that should probably be ascribed to the same man, on the *Handy Tables*. The second part of ms.28.1 contains all that survives of the mathematical works of Euclid (late 4th century – early 3rd century B.C.), one of the main creators of Greek mathematical geometry, with an unusual Byzantine textual tradition for books 11–12.²³

The second codex which deserves special notice is ms.Vat.gr.191.²⁴ Sixteen copyists were responsible for writing it between 1296 and 1298, but one scholar corrected its contents. It has been suggested that Planudes may have been connected with this collection, but this seems unlikely “as no one has ever claimed to see his handwriting in it”.²⁵

It contains an unusual assemblage of treatises, including some astrological texts (another argument against a Planudean connection). The most notable contents include the already discussed Ptolemy's

²² J. Mogenet (ed.), “L'Introduction à l'Almageste”, *Académie Royale de Belgique, Mémoires (Lettres)*, 51 (1956).

²³ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 422–23. Besides the references there see also I. Bulmer-Thomas (1971), ref. II.4.

²⁴ A. Turyn (1964), ref. I.7, pp. 89–97; A. Allard (1982–83), ref. II.3, pp. 69–70; N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.9, pp. 232–34.

²⁵ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 234; A. Duhoux-Tihon (1987), ref. III.14c.

Geography and the *Arithmetica* of Diophantos, as well as the *Sphaerics*, a text-book on the geometry of the sphere, by Theodosios (2nd century B.C.).²⁶ Another rare treatise in it is one of the three extant copies of the commentary by Hipparchos (194–120 B.C.) on the *Phaenomena* of Aratos. Hipparchos was the most rigorous and the ablest of the ancient Greek astronomers. The oldest known copy of this treatise, the Florentine ms.Laur.28.39, of possibly the eleventh century, was also then at Constantinople in the possession of Niketas Kyprianos, the head of the patriarchal chancery and, after 1297, the head teacher of the patriarchal school.²⁷

IV

Between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries the Byzantines preserved a quantity of ancient Greek astronomical texts, but they made no fresh astronomical observations of any importance, unlike their Islamic contemporaries. Even during the Early Palaeologan Renaissance important new Byzantine works on astronomy were slow in appearing. The section on astronomy in the *Quadriwium* of George Pachymeres is superficial.²⁸ The one group of astronomical texts that suddenly began to be copied in large numbers were the *Handy Tables* of Ptolemy. As briefly noted in section III, this consisted of chronological information extracted by Ptolemy from his main astronomical treatises. His list was chiefly concerned with recording the time of the appearance in the sky of the 1022 stars known to him. In the second half of the fourth century A.D. Theon of Alexandria wrote a "Small Commentary" on that list.²⁹ In a modified version it became the most common astronomical work in late medieval Byzantium, but chiefly because it was used, above all, as an "astrological handbook". The *Handy Tables*, with Theon's commentary, provided means to discover the propitious times for any particular actions (or dangerous times, to be avoided). Andronikos II was a convinced believer in astrology and the spread of these beliefs was

²⁶ I. Bulmer-Thomas, "Theodosios of Bithynia", *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, 13 (1976), pp. 319–21.

²⁷ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, pp. 128–30, 142, n. 60. For ms.Laur. 28.39 see also E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. I, pp. 92–3.

²⁸ J. Mogenet (1976), ref. III.8, p. 51.

²⁹ A. Tihon (1978), ref. III.14a (Introduction).

a symptom of the deeply-troubled Byzantine society, seeking means of averting the disasters of foreign wars and internal feuds which increasingly impoverished and ravaged its shrunken territories.

Of fifty-five manuscripts of Theon's "Small Commentary" known to A. Tihon, more than half date from the last years of the thirteenth or from the fourteenth century.³⁰ For astronomy, their diffusion had very little beneficial effect, though some information in them could be used to predict eclipses of the sun (cf. chapter 18).

The Ptolemaic lists in the *Handy Tables* were badly out of date by the time of Andronikos II and amended lists, based on the fresh observations of Islamic astronomers, were more useful. Hence the gradual introduction of this oriental learning into Byzantium.

George Choniades (ecclesiastical name Gregory), was the scholar chiefly responsible for bringing to Constantinople some of the elements of the new Islamic astronomy. He had lived for many years in the separate Greek empire of Trebizond (north-eastern Asia Minor). In 1295–96 he was at the capital of the Mongol Persian state at Tabriz. He was back in his native Constantinople by 1301–02, where he was teaching medicine. In 1305 he was appointed bishop of the Christians at Tabriz and probably died in the second decade of the fourteenth-century. According to later Byzantine statements (in 1347) he was the translator into Greek of several Persian astronomical works, including the astronomical tables of his own teacher, Sams-ad-Din. In the light of what we know otherwise of the life of Choniades, the attribution of these translations to him is eminently probable. Ms.Vat.gr.211, partly written before 1308, consists of a number of such translations and may perhaps be associated with Choniades.³¹

The only body of Islamic observations³² essential for the understanding of what I shall be discussing were the studies of what is known scientifically as the "precession of the equinoxes". Ptolemy was guilty here of very inadequate treatment. In his *Introduction to Astronomy* of 1317 Metochites was even more remiss.

The Islamic astronomers achieved very impressive emendations to Ptolemy's measurements of this phenomenon. The problem arises

³⁰ A. Tihon (1981), ref. III.14b, p. 612.

³¹ The best reconstruction of his career is in L. G. Westerink (1981), ref. III.2c. See also *ibid.*, D. Pingree, ref. III.2a (1964) and ref. III.2b (1985). For ms.Vat.gr. 211 see *ibid.* (1985), pp. 23–5.

³² There is a good summary of the achievements of Islamic astronomers in O. Neugebauer (1975), ref. III.10, vol. I, pp. 7–11.

out of the observational changes due to the gradual shift in the axis of the earth's rotation. The consequence is that stars seen from the same spot at the same time of the year will become displaced with the passage of centuries.³³ This was a matter of practical importance to the makers of astrolabes used in navigation, but also to the casters of astrological horoscopes. Ptolemy had been satisfied with adopting a very rough estimate of this change, amounting in his evaluation to one degree of the earth's annual orbit in a century. Islamic astronomers achieved much more precise estimates. Al-Biruni (973–after 1050) arrived at the estimate of one degree in every 68 years 11 months, which is fairly close to our modern figure of 71 years 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ months.³⁴ The Ptolemaic *Handy Tables* should have been periodically adjusted. This was the aim of a succession of “Persian” tables.

The huge *Introduction to Astronomy* commenting on Ptolemy's *Mathematike Syntaxis* (1317) opened up a new phase in Byzantine astronomical scholarship. “One of Metochites' aims in writing it may have been to demonstrate the superiority of Ptolemaic astronomy” over its non-Greek rivals.³⁵ It made Ptolemy's astronomical system better known. Metochites' treatise had notable deficiencies, but he must be respected as a serious pioneer in this difficult field.

As an introduction to his treatise one must sum up the main features of the Ptolemaic system. “It would be anachronistic to deride Ptolemy for his mixture of scientific observations and absurd arguments.” Modern science had to jettison that entire astronomical edifice. “But his views were the outcome of a coherent philosophical system shared by many of his learned contemporaries.”³⁶ However, fundamental doubts were expressed about the truth of his astronomical system already in late antiquity by two writers, Proclus (5th century) and John Philoponos (6th century). Some of the relevant works were certainly known to Metochites and the others may have been available to him (see below). The fact that he completely ignored these criticisms of Ptolemy brings out the fundamental fragility of his commentary.

³³ G. E. R. Lloyd (1973), ref. III.4, pp. 69–71; S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of the Greeks* (new. ed., London, 1987), pp. 56–8.

³⁴ Ref. III.1a (1963) and ref. III.1b (1970); E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, p. 449.

³⁵ D. Pingree (1964), ref. III.2a, p. 140. For some details about this treatise see I. Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8 in chapter 16, p. 92 n. 4 (continued on pp. 93–94).

³⁶ J. Barnes in his edition (with others), *Science and Speculation. Studies in Hellenistic Theory and Practice* (Cambridge and Paris, 1982), p. xxii.

Ptolemy's *Mathematike Syntaxis*, supplemented by his shorter treatises on the planets and the stars³⁷ (above, section III), was based on three main foundations. There was the traditional Greek cosmology, derived largely from Plato and Aristotle, but flexibly eclectic in using these and other predecessors.³⁸ Secondly there was a mass of observational data (see below). Lastly, there was a discordant, third element, a belief in astrology, not shared by some of his educated contemporaries. This led to the inclusion of much information of use chiefly for the casting of astrological horoscopes.³⁹

To return to the observational data assembled by his predecessors and supplemented by his own observations. The most precise and cautious of his astronomical predecessors was Hipparchos (194–120 B.C.). Ptolemy himself tells us that Hipparchos did not believe that he possessed sufficient information to formulate mathematical models of the movements of the planets⁴⁰ (subjects of Ptolemy's books IX–XIII). Ptolemy was daring enough to go much further. He tried to organize the inherited information, supplemented by his own observations, into a comprehensive astronomical system. He thought that he had successfully combined the observational materials with the theoretical requirements of traditional Greek cosmology.

These cosmological assumptions included the conviction that the earth was the centre of the universe and that it was completely motionless.⁴¹ Ptolemy ridiculed the few Greek scientists (Heraclides, Ponticus and Aristarchus) who had asserted the opposite.⁴² Ptolemy's assumptions were not absurd to an observer on the earth.

Plato and Aristotle had left to their successors some other assumptions which conflicted with many observations. Among them was the conviction that the universe was ruled by completely uniform orderly laws. This may be true, but the laws that Ptolemy tried to impose seemed to conflict with what could be observed about the movements of the sun, the moon and the five planets known to the Greeks

³⁷ There are good accounts in O. Neugebauer (1957), ref. III.9; G. E. R. Lloyd (1973), ref. III.4; J. Mogenet (1973), ref. III.7; G. J. Toomer (1984), ref. III.13.

³⁸ H. B. Gottschalk, "Aristotelian Philosophy in the Roman World from the time of Cicero to the end of the second century A.D.", in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Principat*, 36, pt. 2 (Berlin and New York, 1987), pp. 1164–65.

³⁹ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, p. 430.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ A. Tihon (1981), ref. III.14b, p. 604.

⁴² J. Mogenet (1973), ref. III.7, pp. 274–75.

(Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn). The movements of all these bodies should have been perfect, which meant according to Plato that they should have been circular, though in fact they are elliptical.

Ptolemy set out to provide geometrical models from which the motions of those seven bodies could be computed and predicted. These models had to overcome the observed irregularities. Thus, it was known that Mercury and Venus revolved round the sun, but complex and ingenious models were devised by Ptolemy to demonstrate how the sun, and those two planets revolving round it, were together rotating around the earth. The movements of the moon could only be satisfactorily projected through extraordinary geometrical devices.⁴³ Thus Ptolemy became the one ancient astronomer to offer all-embracing system that appeared to fulfil all the traditional requirements. Ptolemy thought that he could prove that the observed orbits were a combination of circular ones (*i.e.* perfect ones).

Some of his mathematical models, by conflicting patently with observational data, left even Ptolemy seriously troubled. He defended himself in a passage in book XIII by invoking "the inadequacy of the devices open to us" and the inability of mere humans to understand fully things that are divine. Hence "we should try to fit the simpler hypothesis, as far as possible, to the movements of the heavens, and, if this does not succeed, then *any possible hypotheses*"⁴⁴ (my italics). In fact, the Ptolemaic system was intended "as nothing but a series of geometrical hypotheses" and "its greatest deficiency is precisely that it was no more than that."⁴⁵

One of the most trenchant ancient critics of the Ptolemaic astronomical system was Proclus (410–85 A.D.). He mentioned his doubts in a number of works, but most explicitly in his *Outline of the Hypotheses of the Astronomers*. Proclus appreciated the ingenuity of Ptolemy's geometrical methods, but doubted whether they corresponded to any reality:

are these only inventions? . . . If they are only inventions their authors have . . . deviated from physical bodies into mathematical concepts and

⁴³ G. E. R. Lloyd (1973), ref. III.4, pp. 63, 124–25 and a brief summary in Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 432–33.

⁴⁴ Lloyd, *ibid.* (1973), pp. 127–29.

⁴⁵ G. E. M. de Ste Croix in A. C. Crombie (ed.), *Scientific Change* (London, 1963), p. 86.

have derived the causes of physical motions from things that do not exist in nature.⁴⁶

Metochites certainly used this Proclian treatise,⁴⁷ though he never mentioned Proclus' name or the existence of such doubts. Ševčenko, the best biographer of Metochites, was justified in speaking of his lack of scientific honesty.⁴⁸

John Philoponos was the most acute and devastating ancient critic of Aristotelian dynamics and cosmology. His cosmological arguments arose out of his Christian beliefs: God had created the Universe and there was no difference between the nature of the earth and of the heavenly bodies.⁴⁹ It is uncertain how many of his relevant writings were known to Metochites. As his great enemy, Nikephoros Chumnos, used the *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Proclum* (of 529) and the commentary on the Aristotelian *Meteorologica*,⁵⁰ Metochites, presumably, also must have looked at these. They demolish the whole edifice of the Aristotelian cosmology as contrary to Christian teaching and, thus, dispose also of the Ptolemaic cosmology. In the commentary on the *Meteorologica* the sun is treated as merely a mass of flaming rocks and not as something made of divine essence.⁵¹ Philoponos' most frontal attack on the whole Ptolemaic geometrical model is in his *De Opificio Mundi* (546–49).⁵² but we lack evidence about Metochites' knowledge of this treatise. In any case, whatever Metochites may have known of the writings of Philoponos, he ignored their anti-Ptolemaic criticisms, just as he did with Proclus.

The treatment by Metochites of the "precession of the equinoxes" is a clear instance of his avoidance of solutions that necessitated new observations. He made no attempt to change Ptolemy's rough estimate of a shift of 1 degree per century, though he knew of the new 'Persian' tables modifying this (see below). He recognized that since

⁴⁶ Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 444–46. See especially A. Segonds, "Proclus: astronomie et philosophie", in J. Pépin and H. D. Saffrey, *Proclus, Lecteur et Interprète des Anciens* (Paris, 1987), pp. 319–34.

⁴⁷ I. Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8 in chapter 16, p. 103 and n. 3.

⁴⁸ I. Ševčenko (1982), ref. I.9 in chapter 16, no. 8, p. 30.

⁴⁹ For his criticisms of Aristotle see G. E. R. Lloyd (1973), ref. III.4, pp. 158–62. This inevitably involved also a refutation of Ptolemaic cosmology and of his entire astronomical system. Cf. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 446–48.

⁵⁰ J. Verpeaux (1959), ref. I.12 in chapter 16, pp. 127–31.

⁵¹ Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, pp. 447–48.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 448.

Ptolemy's time (which he estimated at 1200 years earlier) the observed location of all the stars must have altered by 12 degrees. He repeated several times that he was going to adjust all the star locations to the first year of the reign of Andronikos II (1283), but he never carried this out.⁵³

In an autobiographical passage Metochites explained that he was taught astronomy by a well-known scholar, Manuel Bryennios (in *c.* 1312–16), who had been previously instructed by someone who had come from Persia⁵⁴ (perhaps Choniades). This was his only admission that he was aware of the value of the new Islamic learning. But in the preface to his treatise Metochites exclaims: "be a Greek and shun the theories of the Indians, the Scythians or the Persians, or any other foreign ideas".⁵⁵ The only excuse one can adduce for this piece of chauvinistic bombast is Metochites' lack of interest in astrology, which benefitted most from the new 'Persian' tables.

Metochites was adhering to the Byzantine tradition of not questioning established ancient authorities, and Ptolemy was certainly such a one. On one controversial point he stated that Plato and Aristotle had identical views with Ptolemy, when he clearly knew that this was untrue.⁵⁶ Metochites was here using the *Epinomis*, a mainly astronomical and mathematical work which Byzantine tradition mistakenly regarded as Platonic. The author was probably Philip of Opus, a follower of Plato and it was evidently composed after Plato's death.⁵⁷

Metochites was satisfied with a purely theoretical exposition. There is no evidence that he tried to verify any of the astronomical data and he did not add any fresh personal observations. Only four complete manuscripts of his work dating from the fourteenth century survive today (though there are more *codices* containing some excerpts).⁵⁸ One, ms.Vat.gr.1365, was a fair copy written for Metochites and the other luxury copy (ms.Vat.gr.2176) belonged to one of his children. A third was used by his favourite disciple, Nikephoros Gregoras

⁵³ I. Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8 in chapter 16, p. 92, n. 4; and ref. I.9 in chapter 16 (1982), no. 8, p. 30.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* (1982), p. 22.

⁵⁵ D. Pingree (1964), ref. III.2a, p. 140.

⁵⁶ I. Ševčenko, ref. I.9 in chapter 16 (1975), 43.

⁵⁷ L. Tarán, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus and the pseudo-Platonic "Epinomis"* (Philadelphia, 1975).

⁵⁸ All the manuscripts are listed in I. Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.8 in chapter 16, appendix IV, pp. 280–86.

(ms.Vat. gr.1087). It does not look as if his treatise found much favour with Byzantine readers.

The impulse given by Metochites to the study of Ptolemaic astronomy did produce some further studies, especially in the circle of younger men connected with him, like Nikephoros Gregoras (below, chapter 18). We have to wait until *c.* 1347 for the next important astronomical publication, by George Chrysokokkes. He was a medical doctor, who had studied 'Persian' astronomy at Trebizond, though it is clear that both his teacher and Chrysokokkes were more interested in astrology than in scientific astronomy. He is the only writer to attribute the earlier translation of the 'Persian' tables to Choniades. He explained that as Choniades only provided translations of these Islamic texts he was supplementing these by a commentary. This new publication for the first time gave wide circulation to the texts translated by Choniades in association with the numerous manuscripts of the Chrysokokkes' treatise.⁵⁹

A treatise in three books (*Astronomike Tribiblos*) by Theodore Meliteniotes constituted a culmination of Byzantine astronomical writings in the fourteenth century.⁶⁰ An early draft of book 3 is preserved in the Florentine ms.Laur.28.17, dating possibly from 1353.⁶¹ The complete work, much revised, was composed between then and 1368 (autograph ms.Vat.gr.792).⁶² Meliteniotes was for many years the head of the patriarchal school at Constantinople as well as the archdeacon of the patriarchate (d. 1393). He came from a distinguished Byzantine family and may have been related to Theodore Metochites.⁶³ He certainly used some of the 'Persian' tables translated by Choniades. He may not have derived them from Chrysokokkes as there are some textual variants. And Chrysokokkes was a believer in astrology, while book 3 of Meliteniotes opens with a violent attack on astrology, as contrary to Christian beliefs.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ V. Lampsides, "Georges Chrysococcis et son oeuvre", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 38 (1938), pp. 314–16; D. Pingree (1964), ref. III.2a, pp. 140–41; J. Mogenet (1976), ref. III.8, pp. 52–3, and n. 39 on p. 53; A. Tihon (1981), ref. III.14b, pp. 616–18 and ref. III.14c (1987), pp. 477–78.

⁶⁰ Mogenet (*ibid.*, 1976), p. 53.

⁶¹ A. Duhoux-Tihon (1987), ref. III.14c, pp. 479–80. Its contents are listed in D. Pingree (1985), ref. III.2b, p. 23. The items on fos. 1–74 and 179–201 were copied from Choniades.

⁶² G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6.

⁶³ *Ibid.* For the date of his death see Ch. Astruc in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4 (Paris, 1970), p. 417.

⁶⁴ H. Hunger in *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung* (London, 1973), no. XX, pp. 148–49.

Meliteniotes praised highly the achievements of Islamic astronomy, while stressing that it built on the foundation of Ptolemaic writings. In book 1 he discusses the mathematics of the various systems of astronomical observations, even explaining how one should construct an astrolabe. Book 2 contains an exposition of the Greek astronomical system, based mainly on Ptolemy and Theon. Book 3 explains the corrections introduced by Islamic astronomy to those earlier ancient Greek tables, necessitated by the imprecision of the Ptolemaic calculations as well as the passage of another twelve hundred years.⁶⁵ This last book was the most original contribution and was reproduced independently with greater frequency than the rest of his treatise.⁶⁶

V

The study of musical theory, or 'Harmonics', was regarded as a branch of mathematics.⁶⁷ In the Byzantine education of the Palaeologan period it was treated as a part of the scientific 'Quadrivium' and it forms the second part of the *Quadrivium* of George Pachymeres (above, section II). Planudes taught 'Harmonics' and had a collection of texts on it.⁶⁸ The subject-matter of the Palaeologan instruction in this discipline consisted largely of discussions of acoustics and of the theory of rhythm.

Manuel Bryennios, who introduced Theodore Metochites to astronomy, early in the fourteenth century wrote a treatise on *Musike* in three books. It "is the most comprehensive surviving codification of Byzantine musical scholarship".⁶⁹ Much of it is very similar to the second part of the *Quadrivium* of Pachymeres, probably because they shared common sources, now lost,⁷⁰ but Bryennios is more detailed. He provides much information "which either has not been handed down at all or has come to us in altered shape".⁷¹

As Bryennios explains at the very start, he had written his treatise

⁶⁵ J. Mogenet (1976), ref. III.8, p. 53.

⁶⁶ A. Duhoux-Tihon (1987), ref. III.14c, pp. 482–83.

⁶⁷ There is a good account in H. Hunger (1978), vol. II, pp. 183–95 and 213–18 (bibliography).

⁶⁸ C. N. Constantinides (1982), ref. I.2, pp. 77–8.

⁶⁹ L. Richter, "Manuel Bryennios", *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980 edn.), vol. III, p. 400; C. H. Jonker (1970), ref. IV.4 (the introduction), pp. 17–34.

⁷⁰ Jonker, *ibid.*, pp. 26, 30–31.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27, citing L. Richter (1962), ref. IV.5.

in order to prevent the musical theory of antiquity from being lost. He owed most to Aristoxenos, one of the most distinguished disciples of Aristotle,⁷² and to Ptolemy's 'Harmonics'. Ptolemy was his main mathematical source. I shall have more to say about the later studies of the Ptolemaic 'Harmonics' in discussing the writings of Nikephoros Gregoras, the favourite pupil of Metochites (chapter 18).

Bryennios concluded his treatise with a quotation from Aristoxenos about the differing attitudes of a practising musician and of a mathematical, musicological theoretician. Aristoxenos was a convinced defender of the importance of practical judgement by expert musicians.⁷³ While Bryennios was concerned chiefly with musical theory and with ancient Greek doctrines,⁷⁴ he did pay some attention to the Byzantine musical practice of his own time. His treatise became very popular and we have numerous manuscripts. Fourteen of the *codices* known to G. H. Jonker, the editor of his treatise, can be dated to before 1350.⁷⁵

VI

Medicine must have an important place in any account of Byzantine science. The hospitals of Constantinople and some other leading cities were superior to anything in contemporary western Europe. There was a continuous tradition of well-organized medical training at Constantinople. Orthopaedics and surgery were particularly well-practised.⁷⁶ The ancient Greek medical literature, which contained a vast amount of practical and useful learning, had continued to be copied in every period since the Byzantine Renaissance of the ninth and tenth centuries.

The holdings of the Medicean library in 1494 provide one significant sample.⁷⁷ Of some forty-four manuscripts in it containing Greek medical texts, ten were probably copied in the fourteenth century, and

⁷² A. Brancacci (1984), ref. IV.1. All the ancient sources on Aristoxenos and the identifiable fragments of his writings are collected in F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, pt. 2 (Basle, 1945).

⁷³ G. E. R. Lloyd, "Observational error in later Greek science", in J. Barnes *et al.* (eds.), *Science and Speculation. Studies in Hellenistic Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 132–33, 162–63.

⁷⁴ H. J. W. Tillyard, *Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (London, 1923), p. 64.

⁷⁵ G. H. Jonker (1970), ref. IV.4, pp. 45, 47.

⁷⁶ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, vol. II, pp. 287–316.

⁷⁷ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3 vol. II, pp. 628–54.

four more, though later, contained the writings of John Zacharias, the most distinguished medical scholar in the later years of Andronikos II and the emperor's doctor by 1323.

The most valuable part of the ancient Greek legacy were the writings of Galen (129–199 A.D.). He not only tried to codify much of ancient medical science, but also to provide its philosophical justification.⁷⁸ Among the Medicean manuscripts of Galen's works copied in the fourteenth century was a codex of his *Method of Healing*, (ms.Laur.74.6), his most important clinical writing, providing the most extensive

account of Galen's attitude towards medical theory and practice . . . embracing not only a whole range of varied diseases but also the philosophical arguments and presuppositions that in Galen's view should govern the doctor's . . . activities.⁷⁹

John Zacharias wrote an important adaptation of this treatise (see below).

Another of the Medicean *codices* of Galen copied in the fourteenth century (ms.Laur.74.9) was his longest treatise (17 books) on the *Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, which has its starting point in Aristotle's biological writings and tries to formulate a philosophical justification of medicine.⁸⁰ Yet another *codex*, possibly of the fourteenth century (ms.Laur. 74.16) contained one of his last works, *De Locis Affectis*, discussing a lifetime of experience as a brilliant diagnostician and revealing an immense range of medical knowledge.⁸¹

When between 1332 and 1335 Emperor Andronikos III wanted to make a valuable gift to his then ally, King Robert I of Naples, he sent him a *codex* of Galen's writings. He was, presumably, aware that "Galen appears to have been a great favourite" of Robert. His court physician, Niccolò of Reggio translated for him from Greek into Latin at least 27 works of Galen, though many of the manuscripts used by him may not have come from Byzantium but were rather of south-Italian origin.⁸²

⁷⁸ F. Kudlien (1952), ref. V.3; V. Nutton (1976), ref. V.4. On the philosophical foundations of Galen's writings see P. Moraux, *Galen de Pergame, Souvenirs d'un Médecin* (Paris, 1985) and in his *Der Aristotelismus bei der Griechen . . .*, vol. II (1984), pp. 687–808.

⁷⁹ F. Kudlien and R. J. Durling (eds.), *Galen's Method of Healing* (Leiden, 1991), pp. vii and 1.

⁸⁰ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.3, vol. II, p. 631.

⁸¹ Moraux, *op. cit* (1985), pp. 166–67.

⁸² G. Cavallo, "La trasmissione scritta della cultura greca antica in Calabria e in Sicilia tra i secoli X–XV", *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 4 (1980), pp. 233–35; G. Baader (1981), ref. V.1, pp. 215–16.

The top elite of Byzantine doctors were steeped in Galen and familiar with other medical authorities of late antiquity. These other writers included Oribasius (c. 320–400 A.D.), doctor of the emperor Julian, Alexander of Tralles, surgeon in the Byzantine armies reconquering Italy in the 530s, Aitios of Amida, an imperial court doctor in the sixth century and Paul of Aegina, active at Alexandria around 640. The leading doctors of the Palaeologan Renaissance were, indeed, very well-educated men. For example, John Zacharias had been around 1299 a pupil of Planudes and was also a disciple of the encyclopaedist Joseph the Philosopher (above, chapter 15), to whom he dedicated medical writings. Zacharias was also well-versed in astronomy.⁸³

Demetrios Pepagomenos, the Court physician of the emperor Michael VIII wrote a well-informed treatise on gout.⁸⁴ John Zacharias produced an up-to-date account of much of Byzantine medical learning.⁸⁵ In all his writings he made impressive use of his own practical experience. His earliest treatise was on the diagnostic uses of urine. He explained that he wrote it because the subject had been inadequately studied by his predecessors. His second work was intended for use by his friend Joseph the Philosopher, in the latter's encyclopaedia of useful knowledge. It included dietary and hygienic advice. His last, and most important work, *On the Methods of Treatment*, was an adaptation of Galen's similar work. He cited Galen and other ancient authorities and also used translations of some Arabic writings. This was not a mere collection of excerpts from his sources, but a logically planned and coherent discussion of many of the most important medical topics. In its clarity of arrangement it was superior to all the other medical treatises available to Byzantines. It was written in a concise and readable style and in his prefaces Zacharias repeatedly mentions his striving after brevity. It was very different from the exasperating prolixity of Galen, which the *Timarion* of the mid-twelfth century had lampooned (above, chapter 3, section VII). In that imitation of the satires of Lucian, Galen could not be present at the trial of a difficult medical case in the Underworld because he was expanding his treatise on the fevers, the additions being expected to become even more extensive than the original work!⁸⁶

⁸³ A. Hohlweg, ref. V.2a and b.

⁸⁴ H. Hunger (1978), ref. I.4, vol. II, p. 311.

⁸⁵ See the two remarkable articles of A. Hohlweg, refs. V.2a and b.

⁸⁶ O. Temkin (1962), ref. V.5, pp. 221–22.

Zacharias explains that his *Methods of Treatment* is intended to summarize all [medical] science. The first two books deal with causes of diseases, their different symptoms and resultant diagnoses. Books 3–4 are concerned with methods of treatment and the last two books constitute a pharmacological treatise. This work was highly valued and is preserved in numerous manuscripts.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS

I

Nikephoros Gregoras (c. 1296–1361) above all owes his importance to having provided the only fairly reliable narrative source of Byzantine history between 1307 and the late 1340s (below, section V).

Gregoras came to be regarded by members of the educated Byzantine elite as one of the most accomplished, versatile and erudite scholars, referred to respectfully as “the philosopher”. His own opinion of himself was even higher, though, apart from his *Roman History*, his own works do not bear out in quality his immense reputation. His close connexion between 1323 and 1350 with the imperial court made him the inevitable provider of panegyrics of emperors, with all the bombast expected by Byzantines on such occasions. Thus a lament on the death of Andronikos III in 1341 contained an extravagant eulogy of him comparing his achievements with those of the great men of Greek history: Themistokles the victor over the Persians in 480–79 B.C., Alkibiades, the brilliant Athenian active in the Peloponnesian war, his Spartan contemporary Pausanias, and even the Macedonian King Alexander the Great. But we know from Gregoras’ *History* that, in reality, he disliked Andronikos III.¹

His philosophical writings (below, section IV) included things that were pedantic, excessively polemical and in part downright misguided. Except in theology, he was not an original thinker, though very learned. Much of the interest for us lies in illustrating the scholarly priorities, and limitations, of a leading member of the second generation of scholars produced by the Palaeologan Renaissance.

After around 1350 Gregoras’ *History* degenerated into something very one-sided and unreliable. It became virtually an autobiography of an embittered man, belonging to a defeated political-religious faction. In the 1350s, in the treatment of religious controversies where

¹ D. M. Nicol (1996), ref. I.9, p. 44.

Gregoras was the main lay leader of the opposition to the religious policies of John VI, his history loses "all objectivity and degenerates into a diffuse and disquieteningly tendentious account".² The most positive thing one can say about this last tragic period of his life is that it reveals the unshakeable steadfastness of his adherence to what he regarded as the true Orthodox religion and the fanatical courage he displayed in defending it. After his death (1361) his body was dragged through the streets of Constantinople by his rejoicing religious opponents.³

That disastrous period of Gregoras' career after 1350 was the time of the permanent capture of the leadership of the Byzantine church by the mystical (Hesychast) group, mainly monastic, profoundly hostile, or at best indifferent, to the classical secular learning of scholars like Gregoras. Their triumph permanently undermined the educational and literary benefits of the Palaeologan Renaissance (below, chapter 19).

Gregoras was brought up and educated by his maternal uncle, Archbishop John of Heraklea (c. 1250–1328), the best type of a scholarly and humane Byzantine prelate, devoted to the moral elevation of his clergy and the welfare of the people of his diocese.⁴ About 1315 he sent his nephew to Constantinople. A favourite of Andronikos II, Archbishop John could be sure from the start of splendid opportunities for Gregoras. One of his earliest teachers was John Glykys, patriarch of Constantinople (1315–19), a noted exponent of higher learning, who dedicated to Gregoras his treatise on *Correct Syntax*.⁵ Soon, Theodore Metochites, the all-powerful chief imperial minister (above, chapter 16), took him under his patronage and made him tutor to two of his children. The years 1323–28 were among the most productive of his career as a writer, chiefly of rhetorical works, connected with his highly acclaimed private school, dispensing good higher education, literary and philosophical.

The downfall, in May 1328, of the emperor Andronikos II and Metochites was only a temporary setback in the career of Gregoras. Until the late 1340s, he continued to be a leading teacher, 'philosopher' and scientist at Constantinople. The new regime, after 1347,

² G. Ostrogorsky (1968), ref. I.10, pp. 466–67.

³ R. Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. 54.

⁴ V. Laurent (1930), ref. I.6. The fullest account of the subsequent career of Gregoras is in Guiland, *ibid.* (1926).

⁵ R. H. Robins, *The Byzantine Grammarians. Their Place in History* (Berlin and New York, 1993), p. 173

of the emperor John VI Kantakuzenos, a close friend in the past, at first opened for him the highest possible prospects. Early in 1350 John VI invited him to become Patriarch of Constantinople.⁶ Gregoras refused and, as mentioned before, he drifted into becoming the most important lay leader of opposition to John's religious policies. Between 1351 and 1354 he was imprisoned, though John insisted on sparing his life. He was only freed by John's downfall at the end of 1354, but he continued to live in disgrace.

II

In a letter to a friend of *c.* 1335, Gregoras attributed all that men have achieved primarily to God, but added that their thoughts owed much also to the most learned of the ancient Hellenic writers.⁷ His writings and correspondence bear out his acquaintance with a very large part of Greek literature, though his citations were sometimes made from memory and, therefore, were occasionally mistaken.⁸

For many years Gregoras was closely connected with the monastery of Chora, refounded by his erstwhile patron, Metochites, whose library was preserved there. Some of the books used by Gregoras may have once been connected with Maximos Planudes, who had taught for some years at a school attached to Chora. Thus, one of the autograph manuscripts of Gregoras, in addition to his own works, contains his copy of the translation by Planudes into Greek of the Commentary of Macrobius on the "Dream of Scipio" (ms.Vat.gr.116, fos. 4r-54r, 57r-61r).⁹ Gregoras also owned a rich library of his own. Among his favourite authors were, of course, Homer, cited abundantly, Plutarch, the orator Aristides and Synesios, called by him one of the greatest Greek writers. These, together with Plato and Lucian were his principal literary models.¹⁰ He imitated Plato in writing polemical dialogues, the best-known of which is *Florentios* directed against his *bête noir*, the Calabrian monk Barlaam (*c.* 1332). As a literary effort it is very mediocre.¹¹ Unlike Metochites, who was

⁶ H. Hunger (1978), ref. II.4, I, p. 456.

⁷ Letter 48 in R. Guiland's edition (1927), ref. I.4, pp. 182-83.

⁸ E.g., *ibid.*, note to no. 63, on p. 100.

⁹ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. xix.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-82.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-69.

deeply moved by some of his beloved Greek authors (above, chapter 16), Gregoras tended to use them merely as a source of endless citations.

After his downfall from power and exile from Constantinople, Metochites asked Gregoras to safeguard his writings. After the death of Metochites he acted as his literary executor. Copies of the collections of poems and of the "Miscellanea" of Metochites, as well as of his commentaries on Aristotle, survive in manuscripts annotated by Gregoras and he appears to have copied one version of the astronomical treatise of Metochites (ms.Vat.gr.1365). We may owe it to Gregoras that the bulk of the writings of Metochites has been preserved.¹²

Gregoras knew some important, rare ancient and Byzantine authors. Only Metochites and Gregoras can be shown to have used in the fourteenth century the *Bibliotheca* of Photios, with its summaries of 279 ancient and early Byzantine authors (above, section III of chapter 2). The items which interested Gregoras chiefly concerned religious history, but he also copied in his collection of learned excerpts passages from the "Life of Isidore" by Damascius,¹³ who was the Neoplatonic head of the Athenian Academy in the early sixth century A.D. Isidore was an outstanding Neoplatonic teacher, whom Damascius knew as a young man, and his biography is an important source about the Neoplatonists of the fifth century A.D.

The excerpts from Photios were copied by Gregoras into his autograph *codex* now preserved at Heidelberg,¹⁴ containing excerpts from a number of rare authors. They included passages from the "Description of Greece" by Pausanias (possibly 2nd century A.D.) and the "Geography" of Strabo (early 1st century A.D.). These were the two authors rediscovered by Planudes and it is possible that Gregoras may have used Planudean manuscripts, perhaps preserved at Chora. However, in the case of Pausanias he used also some non-

¹² I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. I.12; *idem* (1962), ref. I.11, pp. 184, 282–84 and plates V b and c, VI a and b.

¹³ Ševčenko (1962), *ibid.*, p. 172, n. 2. Photios preserved more than 300 extracts from the "Life of Isidore" the bulk of which is lost. Cf. L. G. Westerink and J. Combes (eds.), *Damascius. Traité des Premiers Principes* (Budé Coll. Paris, 1986), p. ix, notes 1–3. The excerpts made by Photios are edited by R. Henry, *Photius, Bibliothèque*, VI (Budé Coll., Paris, 1971), no. 242, pp. 6–56.

¹⁴ Heidelberg, ms.Palatinus gr.129. It was correctly attributed to Gregoras by A. Biedl, "Der Heidelberger Codex Pal.gr.129—die Notizien-sammlung eines byzantinischen Gelehrten", *Würzburger Jahrbücher*, 3 (1948), pp. 100–106.

Planudean version.¹⁵ Another valuable work, cited by Gregoras in his letters, was the "Lives of the Philosophers" by Diogenes Laertius (lives of Plato and of the Cynic Diogenes).¹⁶

Most of Gregoras' large output of speeches on special occasions, encomiastic lives of contemporaries and religious writings (chiefly saints' lives) does not require detailed comment. The high quality of his textual scholarship stands out in the precision and integrity of his Biblical and patristic citations in the controversial theological writings of his last years (below, chapter 19).

III

The high reputation of Gregoras among his contemporaries owed much to his mathematical and astronomical learning. He was very proud of it. He recalled how his uncle, Archbishop John, by initiating him into astronomy, brought him closer to God. "For the observation of the heavens . . . is the ladder that leads to the knowledge of God".¹⁷ Some of his astronomical publications were also inserted into his *Roman History*.

In 1324 Gregoras submitted to Andronikos II a proposal to correct errors in the Roman Julian calendar and to adjust the current Byzantine calendar accordingly. Andronikos accepted the correctness of his calculations, but thought it unwise to make the required corrections. What Gregoras advocated was virtually identical with the corrections adopted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1578.

Gregoras revealed his lack of political, practical sense in being very resentful that his suggestions were not adopted. He published his recommendations in a separate treatise. Isaak Argyros, the most remarkable Byzantine astronomer of the later fourteenth century, regarded it as a marvellous piece of science and incorporated it in his own work on the correct calculations of Easter.¹⁸

Gregoras also wrote a treatise on how to construct an astrolabe. The subject appears to have been suggested to him by a work on

¹⁵ A. Diller, *Studies in Greek Manuscript Tradition* (Amsterdam, 1983), pp. 157–58.

¹⁶ R. Guiland (1927), ref. I.4, pp. 52, 105.

¹⁷ D. M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Century of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 58.

¹⁸ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, pp. 282–85.

astrolabes by his favourite writer, Synesios of Cyrene. He also knew that John of Alexandria (Philoponos, active in the first half of the sixth century A.D.) had written on this.¹⁹ Gregoras first wrote on the subject before 1328, but he produced a revised version a few years later. His partly autograph *codex*, ms. Vat.gr.1087, contains both versions (fos. 312v–320v).²⁰

Ptolemy's "Harmonics" may have been his last scientific work. As inherited by the Byzantines of the early fourteenth century, it was incomplete, perhaps because it had never been finished. Ptolemy regarded it as an important work. His three books of the "Harmonics" record thoughts which he must have felt to be central to his whole life's work. Here he revealed what he must have considered to be

the deepest insights into the structure of the *cosmos*, based on a systematic analysis of the harmonies of audible music and its replica in the harmonies of the planetary system.²¹

We can appreciate why Gregoras regarded the improvement of Ptolemy's work as an important task. The surviving manuscripts of Ptolemy end with chapter 13.²² But some time before *c.* 1335 Gregoras wrote what he regarded as the necessary corrections and completion (chapters 13–16). He mentioned this in the already cited letter to Kaloeidas²³ and there are notes in some later manuscripts (though not Gregoras' own *codices*) attributing the additions to him. Their style is certainly quite different from Ptolemy's.²⁴ But what Gregoras added corresponded faithfully to Ptolemy's authentic preoccupations.²⁵

Interest in astronomy was often connected with some kind of belief in astrology. This was true of Ptolemy himself, as revealed in his *Tetrabiblos*.²⁶ Several of the fourteenth-century astronomical writers who were admirers of Ptolemy shared a moderate astrological out-

¹⁹ Guiland (1927), ref. I.4, p. 95 (letter to Caloeidas, *c.* 1335), no. 51 of Guiland's edition.

²⁰ I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. I.12, pp. 441–42; Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. xxiv.

²¹ O. Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, 3 vols. (Berlin-New York, 1975), II, p. 931.

²² F. Boll, "Studien über Claudius Ptolemaeus" in *Neue Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie*, Supplement-band 21 (1894), pp. 55–56.

²³ Guiland (1927), ref. I.4, p. 96.

²⁴ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, pp. 272–75.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

²⁶ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. III.1, vol. II, p. 434.

look. Earthquakes and other natural disasters and observable events in the sky, like the appearance of comets, were all portents containing God's warnings to mankind. But only God could cause these happenings and he alone was responsible for all that happened to humans. Theodore Metochites and Gregoras shared these views as did the most distinguished Byzantine mathematician and astronomer of the fourteenth century, Isaak Argyros,²⁷ a great admirer of Gregoras.

Eclipses, capable of being forecast, were a special type of portent. The ability to do this was clearly an important accomplishment of men with such astrological views. Gregoras fairly accurately forecast an eclipse of the sun on 16 July 1330 and also two eclipses of the moon in the same year. He boasts of this in a couple of letters and he also included his account of predicting the solar eclipse in July 1330 in book 9 of his *Roman History*.²⁸ His rival, Barlaam of Calabria, whom Gregoras pursued with obsessive enmity and caricatured in his dialogue *Florentios*,²⁹ predicted the solar eclipses of 1333 and 1337.³⁰

The starting point was in Book 6 of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, explaining the methods of calculation.³¹ Metochites took over Ptolemy's account in his astronomical treatise, where he explained the complicated calculations needed to predict a solar eclipse.³² For the chronological information needed to attempt such calculations it was necessary to use the "Handy Tables" compiled by Ptolemy. There were subsequent commentaries on them by Alexandrian scholars. Theon (second half of the fourth century A.D.) produced two, an elaborate one and a more elementary one (the "Small Commentary").³³ A manuscript of the latter, copied in 1318, has been identified as coming from the circle of Gregoras.³⁴ He may have relied particularly on a different commentary, composed c. 617–19 by Stephanos of Alexandria. In Gregoras' own *codex*, ms. Vat.gr.325, his account of predicting the eclipse of July 1330 is followed by a copy of the commentary by Stephanos.³⁵ However, as far as one can tell, in making his

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 434–36.

²⁸ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. 279.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165–70.

³⁰ J. Mogenet and A. Tihon (1977), ref. III.5.

³¹ Fryde (1996), ref. III.1, vol. II, p. 442.

³² Ševčenko (1962), ref. I.11, p. 260, n. 1.

³³ A. Tihon (1994), ref. III.7a, pp. 605, 607–9.

³⁴ N. G. Wilson in *Isis* 71 (1980), p. 340.

³⁵ A. Tihon (1994), ref. III.7a, n. 23 on p. 608.

calculations Gregoras only used the tables attached to Ptolemy's own treatise,³⁶ though the passage of about twelve hundred years since its composition made it very difficult to apply it to this task. As Mogenet has rightly remarked, it is most astonishing that in using this source Gregoras could have achieved approximately correct forecasts.³⁷

IV

In his 'Life' of his uncle, Gregoras tells us that Archbishop John particularly admired Plato.³⁸ This was apparently the origin of Gregoras' preference for Plato over Aristotle. It was one of the features of his philosophical and religious outlook that made him into an unusual Byzantine thinker.

In the past Plato was often regarded as more of a threat to Christian beliefs than Aristotle could ever be. This was admittedly due in a large part to the reinterpretation of Plato by the Neoplatonists. Gregoras reversed the situation by regarding Plato as more acceptable to Christians. Furthermore, acceptance of much of the Aristotelian philosophy could inspire appreciation of the new scholastic, Western systems, using Aristotle extensively. St. Thomas Aquinas was to some Byzantines a very acceptable thinker. In the next chapter I shall be looking at the two brothers Kydones, classicizing humanists and admirers of Aristotle. Gregoras was a narrower Byzantine polemicist, utterly hostile to the 'Westerners' and their Aristotelian scholasticism. His hostility to the mystical Hesychasts in the Byzantine church originated in his adherence to traditional Byzantine theology. He believed in the 'indivisibility' of God and refused to accept a distinction between God's essence and God's energies, which formed the theological core of the Hesychast mysticism. But his anti-Aristotelian and anti-Western convictions set him apart from some of his leading allies in opposition to the Hesychasts.

His patron, Metochites, had written commentaries on many of Aristotle's treatises, except for the logical writings and the *Metaphysics*, as Gregoras explained in a letter to the Joseph the Philosopher.³⁹ In one of

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. VIIa, p. 280.

³⁷ J. Mogenet (1973), ref. III.4, p. 282.

³⁸ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. 5.

³⁹ Guiland (1927), ref. I.4, p. 58.

his last poems (no. 4), written between 1330 and 1332, addressed to Gregoras, Metochites urged his younger friend to acquire all the writings of Aristotle, which were admirable. In reference to some of them, as for example to the 'Physical' treatises, Aristotle was praised by Metochites for writing all that could be said on their subject matter.⁴⁰

Gregoras' philosophical writings are not numerous. His most popular philosophical piece, preserved in numerous manuscripts, was a commentary on one of the works of Synesios (cf. section III of chapter 16). Gregoras, like Metochites, exaggerated the philosophical content of Synesios' writings, but Synesios was one of the most graceful and sophisticated Greek writers of late Antiquity. Anything written by him was worth commenting upon. Gregoras chose his treatise "On Dreams", which in some parts anticipates modern psychology.⁴¹

The Commentary by Gregoras displays his usual erudition. On the central question of whether dreams are the means of contact between humans and supernatural, divine powers (or else demons) he showed curious inconsistencies. He also expressed different views in his Commentary on Synesios and in his letters written about the same time.

Synesios probably wrote "On Dreams" in the early fifth century A.D. It is a very individualistic piece of writing. He was a Christian, but the strongest philosophical influences are of the Neoplatonists (especially Porphyry). In a letter to John Kantakuzenos (the future Emperor John VI) enclosing his "Commentary (?c. 1330) Gregoras explained that Synesios' "On Dreams" was a very difficult work, like the Delphic oracles.⁴² Synesios was inclined to adopt Plato's view that dreams in some indefinable manner came from the gods and must therefore be treated as a glimpse of true reality. Aristotle rejected this, regarding them as products of our sensations and imagination, as reflections of our conscious thoughts. Gregoras tended here to follow Aristotle, contrary to his usual Platonic preferences.

Gregoras drew heavily on an eleventh-century Commentary by Psellos, a mixture of learning and misinformation typical of many of Psellos' writings. Psellos relied extensively on the Commentary by

⁴⁰ Guiland, "Les poésies inédites de Théodore Métochite", *Études Byzantines* (Paris, 1959), p. 181.

⁴¹ Edited in C. Lacombrade (1978), ref. III.2. Cf. pp. xxxiii-xxxv. See also E. R. Dodds in *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford, 1973), p. 179, n. 2. On Gregoras' Commentary see R. Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, pp. 11, 211-16 and Lacombrade, p. XLVIII.

⁴² Guiland (1927), ref. I.4, letter 23 on p. 12.

Proclus on the so-called “Chaldean Oracles”; a collection of mystical utterances. Gregoras could not be aware that Psellos was using a severely mutilated version of those ‘Oracles’ and that he partly misunderstood his sources.⁴³

On the positive side it should be noted that Gregoras, as a true pupil of the philological scholars of the early Palaeologan Renaissance, noted textual variants in different *codices* of Synesios and discussed the classical meanings of some of the terms used by him.⁴⁴

The other philosophical work of Gregoras, answering eight miscellaneous questions,⁴⁵ must be dated not earlier than May 1347, but it is unlikely to be later than around 1349. It contains answers to questions posed to Gregoras by Helen Kantacuzene after she had become in May 1347, at the age of fourteen, the wife of her father’s co-emperor, John V.⁴⁶ They include some very misguided learning, revealing Gregoras as a dogmatic and prejudiced scholar, delighting in polemics.

The criticisms of some Aristotelian teachings in the eight “Questions and Answers” partly restate what Gregoras had already said in his dialogue *Florentios* (section II above) and in various letters. In one of these, Aristotle is denounced as more of a sophist than an outstanding thinker.⁴⁷ Alleged contradictions are stressed. One striking deficiency of the “Questions and Answers” was the complete ignoring of the ancient commentaries on Aristotle. Unlike some other Byzantine explorers of Greek philosophy, Gregoras was not seriously interested in increasing the understanding of Aristotle. Some of Gregoras’ arguments quite ignored all normal observations of natural phenomena.

Question 4⁴⁸ particularly abounds in nonsense. Aristotle in book I of the *Meteorologica* explained that rivers were formed by water coming from the clouds. Gregoras denied this correct observation, because he alleged that it contradicted the statement of Plato in the *Phaedrus* that rivers flow out of the centre of the earth. He also invoked med-

⁴³ L. G. Westerink in *Texts and Studies in Neoplatonism and Byzantine Literature* (Amsterdam, 1980), pp. 1–2, 6.

⁴⁴ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. 211 and n. 1.

⁴⁵ P. A. Leone (1970), ref. III.3, pp. 488–513 (edition of Greek text). Discussion in Guiland, *ibid.* (1926), pp. 218–25.

⁴⁶ D. M. Nicol (1996), ref. I.9, p. 85.

⁴⁷ Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, p. 225.

⁴⁸ Guiland, *ibid.*, pp. 221–22; P. L. M. Leone (1970), ref. III.3, pp. 504–6.

ical writers (Hippocrates and Galen) and even Homer's *Odyssey*, Moses and St. Basil!

Question 5,⁴⁹ dealing with aspects of Aristotle's cosmology, likewise contains absurd observations. Thus, Gregoras refutes the normal experience that the sun warms the earth on the grounds that it is too distant, as only contact could have such an effect. As an argument he claims that even the moon, which is nearer to earth, does not warm it.

In Question 8⁵⁰ Gregoras believes that he found Aristotle contradicting himself. In book 2 of *De Caelo* he described the earth as spherical, which became the traditional belief of Greek scholars. But Gregoras claimed that Aristotle had made such a belief impossible by a statement in his *Meteorologica*. As evidence Gregoras advanced the absurd argument that in that treatise Aristotle made waters descend from higher parts of the earth. Gregoras then went on to argue that a sphere cannot have an uneven surface and possess higher parts. It should be stressed here that Gregoras' collection of classical texts in the Heidelberg ms.Pal.gr.129 (above, section II) includes excerpts from the "Historical Geography" of Strabo. Yet Gregoras ignores the discussion by Strabo in his book II of that same point. Strabo mentioned the uneven nature of the earth's surface, but observed that this was insignificant compared with the large size of the earth.⁵¹

Question 6,⁵² concerned with Aristotle's *De Anima* ("On the Soul"), raised issues crucial to the understanding of Aristotle's central assumptions. The *De Anima* is a very complex treatise and it can only be interpreted as an example of Aristotle's laborious search for what he regarded as true. Gregoras' treatment of it was a completely unsympathetic search for what might be construed as Aristotle's contradictory doctrines.

Gregoras assumed that Plato was acceptable to Christians while Aristotle was not. Plato believed in the immortality of the soul, while Gregoras believed that he had demonstrated in question 6 that Aristotle lacked such a belief. This was untrue. Actually, neither Plato's nor Aristotle's doctrines about the human soul are really reconcilable with Christianity.

⁴⁹ Guillard, *ibid.*, p. 222; Leone, *ibid.*, pp. 506–10.

⁵⁰ Guillard, *ibid.*, p. 223; Leone, *ibid.*, pp. 512–13.

⁵¹ G. Aujac, *Strabon et la Science de Son Temps* (Paris, 1966), p. 147–48.

⁵² Guillard (1926), pp. 222–23; Leone, (1970), pp. 510–11.

Gregoras argued that Aristotle failed to understand contradictions in his discussion of the immortality of the soul in the *De Anima* and that some of his conceptual assumptions could only mean that the soul was not immortal. It is true that Aristotle's discussion of the soul in the *De Anima* is "possibly the most disputed chapter in the whole Aristotelian Corpus".⁵³ But Gregoras failed to grasp that Aristotle was convinced of the immortality of a part of the "rational soul". The way in which Gregoras logically dissected Aristotle's alleged contradictions was not conducive to explaining Aristotle's real beliefs.

Whether Aristotle or Plato was more compatible with the Christian Revelation would be debated more searchingly long afterwards. A serious discussion of Aristotle's acceptability to Christians also had to combine the examination of Aristotle's *De anima* with his other treatises, like the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*. There was none of this in Gregoras' narrowly conceived and superficial treatment. Demetrios Kydones, writing between 1371 and 1374 to the same, now much older, Empress Helen, approached these problems far more constructively. He recognized that not all the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle could be acceptable to Christians, but that some of the teachings of these two philosophers were compatible with Christianity. Already St. Augustine had been able to make the necessary clear distinctions.⁵⁴ Western, Latin theology was, of course, utterly repugnant to Gregoras.

V

The *Historia Romaike* of Gregoras covers the years 1204–1358.⁵⁵ Down to 1308 it is largely an abbreviated version of his predecessors, Akropolites and Pachymeres, with some corrections and additions of his own. Where Gregoras covers the same events as Pachymeres, the latter usually proves more reliable (above, section IV of chapter 15).

Gregoras wrote the first part (books 1–11), down to the death of

⁵³ G. E. R. Lloyd, *Aristotle: the Growth and Structure of his Thought* (Cambridge, 1968, paperback edition), p. 198. Chapter 9 (pp. 181–201) is concerned with aspects of this and related problems. See especially pp. 184–85, 195–201. It is a lucid and masterly discussion.

⁵⁴ F. Kianka, "The letters of Demetrios Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakuzene Palaiologina", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), pp. 157–58.

⁵⁵ The sources for Gregoras' *Historia* are listed in section II of the bibliography to this chapter. See also Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, pp. 228–57.

Andronikos III (in 1341), after 1337.⁵⁶ Thus, it was from the outset the work of a very experienced man. The narrative of the years after his arrival at Constantinople in 1315 becomes progressively more detailed and more autobiographical. Books 12–17, down to 1349, are particularly detailed and, down to that point, in Ostrogorsky's opinion, "in general reliable".⁵⁷

Besides the narrative of Gregoras, the only other now surviving history, covering the years 1321–57, is the autobiographical memoirs of John Kantakuzenos, co-emperor with John V in the years 1347–54, as the emperor John VI. He wrote them in the years after his abdication on 10 December 1354. Four out of the surviving six manuscripts were written in a scriptorium closely connected with him. The only one which is dated (on 8 December 1369), may be the oldest of them (Florentine ms.Laur.9.9).⁵⁸

This is a very one-sided work, telling, with impressive skill, only what suited John in describing his very chequered career and his prolonged attempts to achieve and retain power over the Byzantine state. An eminent Russian historian recently called it a work of fiction rather than a history.⁵⁹ There is much justification for this comment. If we ignore its frequent lack of veracity and merely treat it as a fascinating work of Byzantine literature, it remains a unique piece of autobiographical writing. It is written with an unusual simplicity and concreteness; in parts it imitates ancient Greek models, especially Thucydides. It is lively and eminently readable. It gives us an invaluable glimpse of the arrogant sense of superiority of one of the wealthiest Byzantine aristocrats and his conviction that only men of his rank should rule the state. It also displays the indifference of his class to the miseries that its feuds were inflicting on the rest of the Byzantine population.

By combining Gregoras and Kantakuzenos' accounts of the same events we can often gain a fuller picture of what seems to have happened. Where Kantakuzenos had no reason to deceive his readers, especially in describing his successes, he repeatedly furnishes information available nowhere else.

⁵⁶ H. Hunger (1978), ref. II.4, p. 458.

⁵⁷ G. Ostrogorsky (1968), ref. I.10, p. 466.

⁵⁸ E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. III.1, vol. II, p. 507.

⁵⁹ I. N. Ljubarskij, "New trends in the study of Byzantine historiography", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), p. 137. He summarizes the views of A. P. Kazhdan (1980), ref. II.5.

After around 1350 Gregoras' *Historia* degenerated into something as one-sided, and often unreliable, as Kantakuzenos' memoirs. However it does contain invaluable documentation on the religious controversies,⁶⁰ about which Kantakuzenos curiously said very little. In the first part of his *Historia* Gregoras eulogised Kantakuzenos, whose patronage he enjoyed for many years. But his attitude changed with the growing enmity between them, especially from 1350 onwards. However, Gregoras may have been truthful in claiming that supreme power brought into prominence the negative traits of Emperor John VI's character, great arrogance, lapses into pitiless ruthlessness but also spells of paralysing indecision.⁶¹

Gregoras' books 18 to 37, dealing with the 1350s, ceased to be objective history. Books 30–35 are a purely religious treatise of anti-Hesychast polemics. That final part of his *Historia* is best left to the next chapter.

Gregoras believed that history should be regarded as merely unfolding God's providence. It must be written in order to reveal God's achievements acting through men, thus ministering to God's glory. Except in the early books down to 1307, where he was following a more rationally-motivated Pachymeres, Gregoras did not delve much into the causes of events.⁶²

However, his *Historia* is full of valuable, and, at times, unique information and "throws considerable light on constitutional, administrative and economic questions",⁶³ though he had little interest in the majority of ordinary humble people. It is a narrative fully aware of the tragic shrinking of the Byzantine state, especially in his native Asia Minor. He throws light on many things that were going badly wrong. He describes a general increase in taxes in 1321, designed to propitiate the Turks and slow down, by payments of tribute to them, their victorious advances. He speaks of the pressure of this taxation and of the misery inflicted on the bulk of the population.⁶⁴ The oppressiveness of the tax-collectors was one of the most serious popular grievances. He describes, for example, the career of John Batatzes as the *anagrafeus*, the official who estimated the value of

⁶⁰ Below, chapter 19.

⁶¹ A. P. Kazhdan (1980), ref. II.5, pp. 292–93.

⁶² R. Guiland (1926), ref. I.3, pp. 231, 235–36.

⁶³ Ostrogorsky (1968), ref. I.10, p. 466.

⁶⁴ P. Charanis, "Internal strife in Byzantium during the fourteenth century", *Byzantion*, 15 (1940–41), pp. 223, 225.

property and fixed the tax accordingly. This man became rich through the taxes he had administered.⁶⁵ Gregoras provides evidence of the spread of the sale of offices by the imperial government.⁶⁶ His narrative is one of our chief sources for the setting up in 1329 of a new imperial highest tribunal of "the general judges of the Greeks" in order to check judicial corruption and of the trial and exile of most of these judges in 1337 for their own flagrant misconduct.⁶⁷

In a manner typical of a Byzantine scholar, steeped in classical literature, Gregoras used every opportunity to display this learning. Thus his account of a revolt in the summer of 1342 at Thessalonica against the rich class of landowners who hitherto had controlled that city (the so-called revolt of the Zealots) sums up what happened as follows: The regime of the Zealots

recalls no other form of government. It was not an aristocracy such as Lycurgus instituted among the Lacedaemonians . . . Nor was it a democracy like the first constitution of the Athenians established by Cleisthenes . . . It was similar neither to the regime decreed by Zaleucus to the Epizephyrian Locrians nor to that established in Sicily by Charondas of Catana. Nor was it a mixed constitution formed by the combination of two or three different constitutions, as happened in Cyprus or in ancient Rome. It was rather a strange ochlocracy.

This tells us virtually nothing except that Gregoras detested this popular revolution. A few more concrete details vouchsafed by him show that it was a popular regime that despoiled the rich and that "Thessalonica under the Zealots was virtually an independent republic".⁶⁸

One of the original features of the best Byzantine historians like Zonaras or Choniates, had been their willingness to castigate the tyrannical abuses of imperial autocracy (above, chapter 3). Pachymeres did likewise, especially in his pitiless exposure of the sinister side of the rule of Michael VIII. Gregoras was much more apologetic about Michael. He mentions the regrettable shedding of the blood of his opponents, but prefers to speak of Michael's notable achievements.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223, n. 60.

⁶⁶ P. Lemerle, *Philippes et la Macédoine Orientale à l'Époque Chrétienne et Byzantine* . . . (Paris, 1945), p. 236.

⁶⁷ P. Lemerle, "Le juge général des Grecs et la réforme judiciaire d'Andronic III" in *Mémorial Louis Petit, Mélanges d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Byzantines* (1948), pp. 295–96; I. Ševčenko, *Society and Intellectual Life in Late Byzantium* (Variorum Reprint, London, 1981), no. 8 ("Léon Bardales et les Juges Généraux"), pp. 252–53.

⁶⁸ P. Charanis, *loc. cit.* (1940–41), p. 216.

⁶⁹ A. P. Kazhdan (1980), ref. II.5, pp. 302–3.

He had obvious preference for the weak but learned Andronikos II, though he repeats the unsavoury allegations about his personal life, trumpeted persistently by his estranged second wife, Yolanda (Eirene),⁷⁰ without questioning whether they were true. Paul Lemerle was sceptical about that.⁷¹ Gregoras' complacent reciting of such personal gossip, may have given us, however, the only extant explanation of the bitter hostility and recurrent civil wars (1321–28) between Andronikos II and his grandson, the future Andronikos III. John Kantakuzenos, the chief force behind that grandson, gives an account of his relations with his grandfather which is completely one-sided and partial to Andronikos III. It is only from Gregoras that we learn that Andronikos III had killed his brother Manuel, and that Andronikos II detested his grandson for his dissipated lifestyle and the huge debts he had incurred to the Genoese merchants.⁷²

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⁷⁰ D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits 1250–1500* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 53–54.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE TWILIGHT OF THE SCHOLARLY RENAISSANCE (AFTER 1341)

I

The main problem discussed in this chapter, and the following chapter, is of some of the reasons why from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards scholarly activity in Byzantium permanently declined. Traditional education continued in the main cultural centres and many manuscripts were still being copied. The Byzantine civilization could still produce a small elite of very impressive scholars who in handling textual problems were superior to their Italian contemporaries and had much to teach them. This became clear when some of them introduced the best of Greek literature into Italy. They included Manuel Chrysoloras, who introduced the teaching of scholarly Greek to Florence (d. 1415), Cardinal Bessarion (d. 1472), the patron of Byzantine scholars in Italy after 1440, and Andronikos Kallistos (in Florence 1471–75) the best of the Byzantine scholars who taught the young Angelo Poliziano, the greatest classical scholar active in Florence in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

However, N. G. Wilson is right in noting that during the last century of Byzantine independence there was comparatively little fresh achievement in Byzantine literary and scientific scholarship and more stagnation than intellectual progress. He entitled the chapter dealing with that period the 'Epigoni'. He observed that "there is no injustice in using it to describe the scholars of the last hundred years of the Byzantine empire". And he added that "with a few exceptions manuscripts written in the second half of the fourteenth century and later are not valuable to editors".¹

Apart from Constantinople, which continued to attract young Byzantines desirous of advanced education (e.g. Bessarion from Trebizond in north-eastern Asia Minor), Mistra in the Peloponnese

¹ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.5, p. 265.

was a centre of scholarly patronage from its autonomous 'despots' until its conquest by the Turks in 1460.² But

in the last half century of the empire's existence there is nothing to record, either in the capital or in Mistra, that can, possibly, compare with the achievements of earlier generations.³

Here I want to look at a few notable Byzantines active in the middle and later fourteenth century; the last stages in the life of Gregoras, Theodore Meliteniotes, Nicholas Kabasilas and the brothers Demetrios and Prochoros Kydones. A common feature was their shift from secular to religious scholarship and this constituted one of the causes for the decline of the secular, scholarly Renaissance. In the next chapter I shall widen my inquiry by attempting some comparison between the Byzantine Renaissance, in its lack of enduring vitality and the Italian Renaissance of the later fourteenth and subsequent centuries with its far greater capacity to endure and to evolve in notably original ways.

II

The reign of Andronikos III (1328–1341) was the last period of internal peace in Byzantium and one of some territorial reconquest. As befitted a grandson of Andronikos II, he appears to have had some genuine scholarly interests, especially in science. At his death in June 1341 his heir was a child of nine. As Emperor John V he lived until 1391 and is not known for any scholarly or cultural patronage.

Andronikos III's chief adviser, John Kantakuzenos (later senior emperor, 1347–54, as John VI), was not allowed to stay in power and was driven into a reluctant rebellion. The third book of his autobiographical *History* speaks of the breaking out of

the worst civil war that the Romans had ever known. He did not exaggerate much when he described it as a war that led to almost total destruction, reducing the great Empire of the Romans to a feeble shadow of its former self.⁴

² The fullest account is by D. A. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat de Morée*, vol. II, *Vie et Institutions* (Athens, 1953). Cf. also J. Lognon in *Revue de Synthèse*, July–September, 1954, pp. 111–33. See also Wilson, *ibid.*, pp. 269–70.

³ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 270.

⁴ D. M. Nicol (1996), ref. I.3, p. 45.

Worse was to come in the second half of the fourteenth century.⁵ The Turks gained a permanent footing in Europe in the 1350s and by the end of the eighties they had conquered much of the Slavonic Balkans north of Greece. Civil Wars between members of the Palaeologan dynasty were a recurrent cause of further devastations of the shrunken and impoverished remnant of Byzantine territories. They consisted of two virtually autonomous units, the main state, centred on Constantinople and the Despotate of Morea, with its capital at Mistra in Lakonia, that came to control almost all of the Peloponnese. It was only through extraordinary luck that they retained independence until the 1450s, when the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453 and subdued the Despotate in 1460.

The impoverishment of the Byzantine government and lack of strong cultural interest among the successors of John VI, who was forced to abdicate in December 1354, meant that imperial patronage of scholarship ceased to amount to much. John V, who was sole emperor from 1354 to 1391

was not inclined toward literature or study and apparently had little patience for listening to literary or rhetorical works.⁶

Another development inimical to the flourishing of Byzantine Hellenic learning was the return, from 1337 onwards, of intense religious controversies and the triumph in the church of extremists hostile, or at best indifferent, to secular learning. The religious conflicts produced a multitude of theological writings while the output of secular publications dwindled. As I have mentioned in my introduction, several of the ablest and most scholarly intellectuals came to be chiefly pre-occupied with religious publications instead of other scholarly pursuits.

III

This is not a book about Byzantine religious history. However, from the 1340s onwards religious controversies produced such influential and enduring changes in Byzantine civilization that it ceases to be intelligible without much attention to them. After 1347, for the first time in Byzantine history, a fanatical section of the Byzantine church,

⁵ For sources see especially Nicol, *ibid.* and G. Ostrogorsky (1968), ref. I.4.

⁶ F. Kianka, "The letters of Demetrios Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 46 (1992), p. 159.

largely monastic and hostile to secular learning, came to dominate the Eastern Church.⁷ The Patriarchs of Constantinople came to be exclusively drawn from among the monks of the monasteries on Mt. Athos. The gaining of predominance in the church by this so-called Hesychast group was assured by the victory in the civil war of 1341–47 of John Kantakuzenos (John VI). As the senior co-emperor after his capture of Constantinople in February 1347, he assured the vindication of its special theological doctrines. Even after he was forced to abdicate in December 1354, the remaining Emperor John V, though personally indifferent to their outlook, thought it wisest not to reopen the conflict with the Hesychasts.

An exposition of the doctrines of the Hesychasts and their critics cannot adequately be attempted here. However, a very general comment about basic contrasts between the Western Catholic and Byzantine Orthodox churches is necessary and also about differences within the Byzantine church. An admirable summary by A. Kazhdan⁸ can be a starting point for a statement about these contrasts and I have expanded it to provide fuller explanations.

Kazhdan explained that the Western Church stressed “its essential role in salvation (no salvation outside the church)”. The Byzantine church insisted on the importance of the individual’s deeds and thoughts. The active force was man himself coupled with his spiritual father (God) rather than the Church. The means were obedience, humility, fear of God, rather than sacraments. The Hesychasts were the extreme applicants of these convictions, differing in their theological priorities from the rest of the Church, but they were tolerated to do so. “Mysticism had a less heretical tint in Byzantium than in the West.” “Hesychasts thus underscored the individual way to salvation.”

Fervent beliefs in these doctrines and the resultant practice of constant prayer could be rewarded by the individual vision of the divine light as the believer was touched by divine energies.

The origins of Hesychast doctrines and practices can be traced to the earliest age of Byzantine monasticism in the fourth century A.D. Their leading apologist, Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), could truthfully

⁷ For sources see section II of the references to this chapter. For the hostility of the Hesychasts to secular learning, and especially to Hellenic (pagan) literature, see also chapter 9 and section V of chapter 1.

⁸ A. Kazhdan in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47 (1993), p. 88.

claim that he had received oral approval from some of the most austere and masterful prelates of his time, Athanasios I, Patriarch of Constantinople and Theoleptos of Philadelphia (in Asia Minor).⁹ Nobody expected the beliefs and practices of the Hesychast monasteries to change. Their scholarly opponents merely wanted to prevent these doctrines from being imposed on the rest of the Byzantine Church as the sole binding orthodoxy. Thus Gregoras merely attacked some of the doctrinal formulations of Palamas, claiming them to be heretical.¹⁰ After his defeat, mainly for political reasons, at the Church Synods in the summer of 1351, it is these critiques that became permanently condemned. This was the great novelty.

Until these Synods of 1351 the Hesychast doctrines, and the resultant practices of special prayers, were not formally accepted as binding, either by many Byzantine churchmen (especially the non-monastic clergy) or by the bulk of the laity. After 1337 there were doctrinal attacks on the Hesychasts, which Palamas countered by a more comprehensive, and textually better-supported, statement of the Hesychast theology than had been available hitherto. In 1347 John VI secured the appointment of Palamas to the metropolitan see of Thessalonica. After February of that year, as henceforth the senior co-emperor, he secured a Hesychast patriarch for Constantinople, the first of the continuous succession of the Hesychast holders of that top Church office.¹¹ A decree of a Church Synod at Constantinople of 15 August 1351 for the first time made the Hesychast theological doctrines the exclusive “binding truth for the whole Orthodox Church”, and so it “remains to this day”.¹² This was the great innovation. Some leading Byzantines refused to accept this at the time and either spent the rest of their lives in bitter attacks on this new, restrictive orthodoxy, as did Nikephoros Gregoras, or went over to the Western Catholic creed, as did Demetrios Kydones. Nicholas Kabasilas, the most profound Byzantine theologian of the fourteenth century (below, section IV), though supportive of Palamas, had a much wider range of priorities and avoided being either scholastic or polemical.

⁹ J. Meyendorff (1975), ref. II.3, p. 97.

¹⁰ R. Guiland (1926), ref. I.2, pp. 286–87.

¹¹ The most recent account of these events is by D. M. Nicol (1996), ref. I.3, chapters 5–6. See also J. Meyendorff (1988), ref. II.5.

¹² Nicol (1996), *ibid.*, p. 112.

After the Synodal decree of 15 August 1351 made the Hesychast theology into the only accepted body of doctrine, Gregoras fell into disgrace. Kantakuzenos refused to execute or blind him, but had him imprisoned in 1352 and he was only liberated after John VI's abdication in December 1354. In prison Gregoras started writing his lengthy accounts of the Hesychast triumphs though he did not complete them until after his liberation.

Gregoras was not a trained theologian, but he brought to his attacks on Hesychasm, the subtlety and technical expertise of a classical scholar.¹³ This is the only feature of his theological writings that I wish to illustrate. Books 30–35 of his *Historia Romaike* (out of the total of 37) are devoted entirely to these controversies and are almost identical in content with his theological 'refutations'. The most important of these is the second (*Antirrhethici Posteriores*), written in its final form in 1357–58 and including a very detailed demolition of the Hesychast decree of August 1351. It displays considerable subtlety.¹⁴

That decree, promulgated by a politically triumphant party, was careless in exact citation of its theological authorities. Gregoras produced a remarkable linguistic critique and explained the principles which he had adapted in textual criticism.¹⁵

He understands the need for presenting a complete context when discussing a passage and for knowing precisely the purpose of the text in question and the identity of the addressee.

Thus religious controversy led Gregoras into "serious thought about scholarly method . . . His sound appreciation of principles does him credit".¹⁶ While Gregoras' narrative of the conflict with the Hesychasts was very one-sided and his judgements about them were obsessively unfair, yet his treatment of the theological texts was precise and very intelligent, illustrating what Byzantine textual scholarship could achieve at its best.

¹³ R. Guiland (1926), ref. I.2, p. 286.

¹⁴ Guiland, *ibid.*, p. 287; M. Paparozzi (1974), ref. II.6, pp. 921–51; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.1, vol. II, pp. 504–6, 518–19.

¹⁵ Paparozzi, *ibid.*, pp. 946–47.

¹⁶ N. G. Wilson (1983), ref. I.5, p. 266.

IV

As I pointed out earlier, the middle and later decades of the fourteenth century were a time of the predominance of theological and religious controversies, resulting in numerous polemical writings. There was a corresponding decline in literary and scientific publications. This might be illustrated from the activities of several outstanding personalities. The later books of Gregoras' *Historia Romaike* were a notable example of this shift in priorities. The examples of four other distinguished members of the educated elite illustrate this development. They were all men representative of Byzantine civilization at its best.

Theodore Meliteniotes came from a distinguished family. His entire career was spent in the service of the Patriarchs of Constantinople (d. 1393). He was, inevitably, a partisan of the Hesychasts, but he differed from them in having for a long time a deep interest in astronomy. His *Astronomike Tribiblos*, written over the years between 1352 and 1368, was a culmination of Byzantine astronomical writing in the fourteenth century (section IV of chapter 17). One notable feature was a virulent attack on astrology, as contrary to Christian beliefs. He wrote this work in part during a period when he was the head of the Patriarchal school. Later he was promoted to the office of archdeacon of the Patriarchate and became engrossed in a vast compilation of commentaries on the Gospels.¹⁷

Nicholas Kabasilas was a member of another distinguished family. He was born at Thessalonica around 1320 and was still alive in 1391.¹⁸ He wrote the most profound theological treatises produced by any Byzantine in the fourteenth century.¹⁹

Among his principal teachers was his uncle, Neilos Kabasilas, who later succeeded Palamas as the metropolitan of Thessalonica. As a young man Nicholas wrote on astronomy, but later liturgy and theology came to dominate his life. His work on liturgy was particularly concerned with the Eucharist and is one of the most learned and spiritual extant Byzantine treatments. His greatest work, *The Life*

¹⁷ G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6, pp. 172–79; Ch. Astruc in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4 (1970), pp. 411–29; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.1, vol. II, pp. 451, 473.

¹⁸ I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. III.7, no. V, p. 187, n. 2.

¹⁹ S. Salaville, "Cabasilas (Nicolas)", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, II (1953), coll. 1–9; H. G. Beck (1959), ref. II.1, pp. 780–83; J. Meyendorff (1983), ref. II.4, pp. 107–9.

in Christ, "is more concerned with sacramental theology and spirituality than with explaining individual details of the rites". It is a profound statement of what Christ should mean to believers and what should be their response.²⁰ Kabasilas came to be regarded with immense veneration by devout Byzantines.

Nicholas Kabasilas was also the author of two discourses that castigated some of the evils besetting Byzantine society. Between 1341 and about 1345 he composed a discourse absolutely condemning the practice of usury.²¹ The date of the other discourse is controversial.²² It attacked those who had confiscated ecclesiastical properties in order to use the revenues from them for military purposes and it may have been composed as late as the 1370s. It contains some very general condemnations of abuses by men exercising official power, which link it to the earlier historiographical Byzantine tradition of explicit criticism of abuses by political authorities (chapters 3 and 15). It includes a

discussion of the differences between a tyrant and a good official. The former is interested solely in his own advantage . . . enslaves his subjects and disregards the laws; while the latter acts within the law for the benefit of his subjects and shows respect for their human dignity and liberty.²³

Demetrios Kydones was one of the most distinguished Byzantines of the fourteenth century and provides one of the best-known examples of an accomplished Byzantine Christian humanist.²⁴ He was principal secretary (chancellor) to Emperor John VI (1347–54) and soon became his chief minister (*mezazon*). John V, who supplanted John VI Kantakuzenos at the end of 1354, soon found Kydones indispensable and recalled him to the same position. With some intervals when he was abroad, or temporarily out of favour, he acted as chief minister until 1386. Kydones was an accomplished classical scholar, philosopher and mathematician. In order to convey an adequate image of him one must look also at his personality and his views on government and the church.

²⁰ Meyendorff, *ibid.* The citation is from p. 108.

²¹ F. Vernet, "Cabasilas, Nicolas", *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, 2, pt. 1 (1905), col. 1294.

²² I. Ševčenko (1981), ref. III.7, nos. IV–VI.

²³ Ševčenko, *ibid.*, no. IV, p. 132.

²⁴ For sources see section III of the references to this chapter.

Kydones is one of the best-known Byzantines because we have at least 451 of his letters, covering over fifty years of his life, as well as his three autobiographical *apologia*, of which the first was composed after 1363.²⁵ His immensely long period of service at the head of the Byzantine government was a tribute to his vast experience, outstanding ability and exceptional integrity. He was noted for his independence of judgement and his readiness to give good but unpopular advice. In one of the letters addressed to Manuel II, the selected heir of John V, Kydones remarks that the emperor should be glad that he had been absent from an important meeting of the emperor's advisers because "frankly, if he had been present, he would have voted against Manuel's opinion".²⁶ In resigning his duties in 1371, temporarily as it proved, Kydones remarked to John V that the emperor would find other councillors more congenial as they would not remind him continually of the need to observe the laws.²⁷ For some years Kydones had been in charge of the imperial revenues and this adds significance to his denunciations in letters of the crushing fiscal burdens imposed on the poor.²⁸ In his first 'Apology' he was contemptuous about the subservience of the heads of the Byzantine church to the will of the emperor.²⁹

The letters of Kydones are written in a pure ancient Greek, showing a mastery of Attic vocabulary and style.³⁰ His translations of the theological writings of St. Thomas Aquinas are very careful and elegant, to ensure that they would appeal to an elite of readers.³¹ His correspondence contains references to Greek poets, dramatists and historians (e.g. Theognis, Pindar, Sophocles, Herodotus, Thucydides).³² He was steeped in this literature and it was quite natural for him

²⁵ The edition of a selection of letters by G. Cammelli (1930, ref. III.1), though valuable textually, is very inadequate in its chronology and general annotation, as was shown by G. Mercati (1937, ref. III.1b). The best edition is by R. J. Loenertz (2 vols., 1956 and 1960, ref. III.4). Loenertz provides also an invaluable discussion of the letters up to 1375 (1970–71, ref. III.5a–5b). The three 'Apologies' are published in G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6, pp. 359–435. The first 'Apology' is discussed by F. Kianka (1980), ref. III.2, pp. 57–71.

²⁶ C. Cammelli (1930), ref. III.1, p. 50.

²⁷ R. J. Loenertz (1971), ref. III.5b, p. 23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11 and n. 4, pp. 14–15.

²⁹ F. Kianka (1980), ref. III.2, p. 67.

³⁰ R. J. Loenertz (1971), ref. III.5b, p. 5.

³¹ F. Kianka (1982), ref. III.3, pp. 270–71.

³² Cf. E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), p. 25 and n. 92.

to cite it. Kydones was particularly interested in Libanios, the most distinguished fourth-century A.D. teacher of classical Greek. His letters were regarded by Byzantines as a model of correct usage. Kydones owned one of the oldest extant *codices* of the letters of Libanios (ms.Vatic.gr.83 of the eleventh or twelfth century).³³

However, only a few non-religious publications can be credited to Kydones: a collection of mathematical *scholia* to Euclid and another small mathematical work. He owned important mathematical and astronomical manuscripts, including all the works of Euclid, a good selection of Ptolemy's astronomical writings and the remarkable critique by Proclus (5th century A.D.) of Ptolemy's astronomical hypotheses (ms.Laur.28.1 and ms.Vatic.gr.604). His correspondence confirms his mathematical interests.³⁴

The most moving expression of his spiritual preoccupations is in a charming little treatise on "Not Fearing Death". It was written before 1371. It discusses immortality in purely Platonic terms, without a single reference to the Christian faith.³⁵

Kydones greatly admired Plato and his former pupil, Manuel II, once referred to Plato in a letter to Kydones as "your companion". But he rejected Platonism as an autonomous philosophical system. That distinction was reserved solely for Aristotle.³⁶ His discovery of the central role of Aristotelian learning in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas came in 1347. His duties as the chief minister of John VI involved him in frequent negotiations with diplomats and other people from Western Europe and he decided to learn Latin in order to dispense with unsatisfactory interpreters. His teacher was a Dominican from the Convent at Pera (opposite Constantinople) who introduced him to St. Thomas' *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Kydones was fascinated by it and by the wider discovery that the Western scholars were cultivating Greek philosophy so enthusiastically, in contrast to the rather static instruction in it by a handful of Byzantines. As he put it later in his first 'Apology', the Westerners "show great thirst for walking

³³ G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6, pp. 156-57; E. B. Fryde (1996), ref. I.1, vol. II, pp. 558-59.

³⁴ Fryde, *ibid.*, pp. 511-12; F. Tinnefeld (1981), ref. III.8, p. 67.

³⁵ J. Meyendorff (1983), ref. II.4, p. 106 and F. Kianka (1982), ref. III.3, p. 279, n. 55.

³⁶ Kianka, *ibid.*, pp. 278-79.

in the labyrinth of Aristotle and Plato for which our people never showed interest".³⁷

The entire subsequent career of Kydones was dominated by two convictions. He anticipated, rightly, the inexorable growth of the Turkish threat to Byzantium, which had neither the military forces nor the revenues to resist it. For Kydones the only remedy lay in help from Western Europe and especially from crusades promoted by the papacy. That meant that past religious conflicts with the Western church should be forgotten. The promoting of greater familiarity with the Latin theologians was one means to that end. The translations by Demetrios and his younger brother, Prochoros, of works by St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine and St. Anselm were intended to promote this.³⁸ Despite his interest in Greek philosophy, Demetrios translated only theological writings of Aquinas, not his commentaries on treatises of Aristotle.

Aside from his lifelong pursuit of saving Byzantium from the Turks, Demetrios became deeply convinced of the inferiority of Byzantine philosophical and theological learning in comparison with the excellence of Western scholastic scholarship. "It was obvious to him and to others like him that Byzantine intellectual life was in decline."³⁹ One remedy lay in introducing into Byzantine scholarship the more vigorous scholastic methods, as contained especially in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, with "their clear language, strict method, and mastery of Aristotelian philosophy"⁴⁰ (especially Aristotelian techniques of conducting a logical argument). In a letter to a young follower, Maximos Chrysoberges, who had become a Dominican, Demetrios gave a brief description of Aquinas' familiar manner of proceeding:

stating the question under discussion, listing the objections made, then replying to the objections in detail . . . using evidence from the Scriptures and proofs from philosophy.⁴¹

Demetrios' first translation of a Latin theological work was of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Aquinas, completed in December 1354. This

³⁷ J. Meyendorff (1983), ref. II.4, pp. 105–6; Fryde (1996), ref. I.1, vol. II, p. 510. The passage is in G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6, p. 366.

³⁸ Cf. Demetrios' "Defence of Thomas Aquinas" (ms. Vatic.gr.614), cited in F. Kianka (1980), ref. III.2, p. 69, n. 79.

³⁹ Kianka, *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Kianka, (1982), ref. III.3, p. 269.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 274, 285.

was followed by the translation of some of the parts of his *Summa Theologiae*, while its later books were translated by Prochoros. Demetrios was aware of the defects of his translations, which he blamed on his imperfect knowledge of Latin. He also complained of textual problems:

For I had barely one book from which I had to translate, so that it was not easy to discover a corruption of the text, or to correct it, since there was no other copy to compare it.⁴²

This is an illuminating statement of the high textual standards sought by a Byzantine scholar of first rank.

Demetrios' other theological translations included some letters of St. Augustine and excerpts from some of the Augustinian treatises, the treatise by St. Anselm (d. 1109) on "The Procession of the Holy Spirit" and Aquinas' *De Rationibus Fidei Contra Saracenos, Graecos, et Armenios Liber*.⁴³ He also translated a work of the early fourteenth century by the Dominican Ricoldo Pennini da Monte Croce against the Koran, which was used by John VI in his monastic retirement in his "Defence of Christianity against Islam".⁴⁴ Prochoros Kydones (c. 1333/4–c. 1370), besides collaborating with Demetrios on translations of works of Aquinas, rendered into Greek some fragments of the writings of St. Augustine and eight of his letters.⁴⁵ It was Prochoros who was the first to use Thomist methods to criticize the Palamite Hesychast writings.⁴⁶

The quest for Western help, as well as his conviction about the superiority of Western theology, led Demetrios gradually into open opposition to the Byzantine Orthodox Church, now under the domination of fanatically anti-Western Hesychasts. At some date that cannot have been later than 1363 he joined the Western Church⁴⁷ and in 1369 induced his imperial master, John V, to do likewise.⁴⁸ This did not, however, procure the hoped-for Latin crusade. Still pursuing the same quest for Western aid, he became a Venetian citizen in 1391 during a number of visits to Venice in the last years

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁴³ There is a list of translations in F. Tinnefeld (1981), ref. III.8, pp. 68–72.

⁴⁴ D. M. Nicol (1996), ref. I.3, pp. 145–46.

⁴⁵ H. Hunger (ed.), *Prochoros Kydones. Übersetzung von Acht Briefen des Heiligen Augustinus* (Vienna, 1984), Beiheft 9 of *Wiener Studien*.

⁴⁶ J. Meyendorff (1983), ref. II.4, pp. 106–7.

⁴⁷ F. Kianka (1980), ref. III.2, p. 60 and n. 19.

⁴⁸ O. Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (London, 1972), chapter VIII (pp. 188–212).

of his life.⁴⁹ His theological writings and translations of Latin theological works had more effective and enduring consequences, inducing a number of Byzantine anti-Hesychasts to join the Western Church or, at least, to promote the Union of the Western and Orthodox Churches.⁵⁰

There exists one direct link between Demetrios Kydones and the flourishing development of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century. On his stay at Venice in 1390–91 Kydones was accompanied by his friend and younger assistant, Manuel Chrysoloras.⁵¹ It was during that visit that Chrysoloras made contacts there with Florentine scholars which led a few years later to an invitation to him to teach Greek at Florence's university. He did this from 1397 to 1400 and later did the same thing at Milan.⁵² He was the first Byzantine to inaugurate adequate teaching of scholarly Greek in Italy that started the new phase of bilingual (Latin and Greek) Renaissance (see chapter 20).

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⁵⁰ J. Meyendorff (1983), ref. II.4, p. 106.

⁵¹ G. Mercati (1931), ref. III.6, pp. 111–14, 407; R. J. Loenertz, "Manuel Paléologue et Démétrius Cydonès. Remarques sur leurs correspondances", *Échos d'Orient*, 36 (1937), p. 280; F. Tinnefeld (1981), ref. III.8, pp. 43–4.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BYZANTINE AND ITALIAN RENAISSANCES¹

I

There was a very great contrast between the increasingly debilitated remnant of the Byzantine state during the last century of its existence and the rich and politically vigorous principalities and city states of Italy. This difference in material background goes a long way to explain the relative stagnation of scholarly achievements in Byzantium and the buoyant record of the Italian humanistic Renaissance. However, I shall not be concerned with this fundamental contrast any further. There were other important but less familiar contrasts. The perennial limitations of Byzantine scholarly interests and priorities can be highlighted by a comparison with the activities of the pioneer Italian humanists in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Petrarch (1304–1374), the most influential of the pioneers of Italian classical scholarship, was aware of the high standards of literary and textual learning attained by leading Byzantine scholars. But attempts to introduce the knowledge of scholarly Greek at Florence and some other centres of Italian learning achieved no success until the last years of the fourteenth century, because Greek scholars of highest ability were not available in Italy.² Until 1397 the development in Italy of an increasing scholarly interest in Roman civilization was an autonomous Italian event and confined to Latin literature.

We begin with some of the most important scholarly activities of Petrarch. Around 1325, and in the following years, he established a critical text of most of the surviving portions of Livy's Roman history: "He devoted more critical attention to more of Livy than anyone had since Antiquity".³ Rediscoveries of hitherto missing works

¹ My remarks in this chapter on the Italian Renaissance anticipate my forthcoming book on *The Reappearance of a Sense of History in the Early Italian Renaissance*.

² The latest account is in N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy. Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (London, 1992), pp. 1–7.

³ L. D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), p. 206. G. Billanovich in *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica*, 1 (1958), pp. 125, 135.

of Cicero began in the next decade. The most important 'find' was the rediscovery in 1345 of a major part of Cicero's surviving correspondence, the letters to his intimate friend Atticus, to his brother Quintus and to Marcus Brutus.⁴ This created the possibility of an intimate understanding Roman politics and the mentality and culture of the Roman ruling class during the last decades of the existence of the Roman Republic.

Petrarch's scholarly activities were the most influential manifestation of the enthusiastic search by a number of his Italian contemporaries for the works of hitherto little read or lost Latin literature and the understanding of the Roman civilization underlying these writings. Rediscoveries like Cicero's letters confirmed that it was possible to regain a truthful appreciation of that lost world of antiquity. Glimpses of it showed the immense gap between the Italy of the fourteenth century and Roman civilization. A sense of historical change was intensified. I shall have more to say about this in discussing the emergence of Italian humanist historiography. It became obvious to Petrarch that the intervening nine hundred years between the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West and his own time, was an unclassical, ignorant age, when men were largely unaware of the values of the ancient culture and certainly did not understand it. He and his fellow Italian humanists were creating the concept of the Middle Ages; of a civilization that needed radical replacement by something that they regarded as a recapturing of authentic Roman antiquity.⁵ This would restore to Italians the knowledge of their glorious past and enable them to imitate it intellectually and culturally.

The Byzantines knew of no Middle Ages. They believed that they were preserving the legacy of ancient Greek civilization and their quest was for an everlasting continuity. As for seeking an understanding of the Roman state of which they professed to be heirs, this would have required a knowledge of Latin. Few Byzantine intellectuals knew Latin, or, with some notable exceptions, had any desire to learn it.

The more distinguished Italian humanists knew that they were seeking to extend the boundaries of human knowledge. The Byzantines

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁵ See especially T. E. Mommsen, "Petrarch's conception of the 'Dark Ages'", *Speculum*, 17 (1942), pp. 226-42.

mainly wanted to preserve and consolidate the Greek learning that they already had. By about the middle of the fourteenth century their scholars had reached a point where there seemed to be no fields which called for important new achievements. They needed to develop fresh curiosities, but there was little sign of that. Only when in the fifteenth century some of them became instructors of Italians, introducing them to Greek learning, did they re-acquire an important, fresh, scholarly function. But this is something separate from the story of the Byzantine Renaissance.

II

Unlike ancient Greek, which had to be laboriously learnt by the educated Byzantines, classical Latin was readily intelligible to those literate Italians who habitually used medieval Latin. This does help to explain the vigorous spread among Italians of interest in classical Latin literature. The quarter of a century after the death of Petrarch (1374) was a time of growth of humanistic and classical interests in Italy. We can appreciate this in the correspondence on humanistic subjects of Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of Florence from 1374 to his death in 1406. The largest group among his correspondents were notaries (about 40) and chancellors of various Italian states (12).⁶ Coluccio had been a correspondent of Petrarch and played an important part in preserving and popularizing his classical discoveries.

More classical discoveries were being made. In September 1392 Coluccio acquired the remainder of the extant correspondence of Cicero, the so-called "Letters to Familiars",⁷ revealing even more intimately the activities and outlook of this circle of Roman notables. Coluccio became the first humanist to own the entire surviving collection of Cicero's Latin letters.

However, the spread of classical learning was not as yet producing any notable new writings. Coluccio regarded his "Labours of Hercules", composed in the 1390s, as his most significant publication. It was a mythological compilation, "thoroughly medieval" in its "allegorical method". But it "reveals a broad and first-hand knowledge of the Latin classics and an interest" in hitherto neglected authors.⁸

⁶ B. L. Ullman, *The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati* (Padua, 1963), p. 125.

⁷ B. L. Ullman, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (2nd ed., Rome, 1973), p. 220.

⁸ Ullman, *Salutati* (1963), p. 26; Ullman, *Studies* (1973), p. 35.

The new classicizing studies were failing to produce a radical change in direction or achievements in Italian scholarship. Something fresh was needed from outside to initiate such a change. The possibility of Italian humanist scholarship developing in new ways was created by the bringing into Italy of scholarly Greek, taught to such a high standard that much Greek literature, including the most difficult works, became accessible.

Salutati played a crucial part in this. Petrarch had stressed the importance of acquiring a knowledge of Greek. Salutati was also influenced by his discoveries "of allusions to Greek literature in his Roman authors".⁹ In 1397 Manuel Chrysoloras, the friend and assistant of Demetrios Kydones, was induced to come to Florence and he taught Greek there until 1400. It was a superb choice and his disciples included men who became leading Greek scholars in Italy.¹⁰ Once the demand for the teaching of scholarly Greek and the study of Greek manuscripts developed in Italy, Greek scholarship was promoted further there by Italians who had resided at Constantinople and other Byzantines who came to Italy. The Byzantines introduced superior techniques of recovering and editing texts and of translating.¹¹ The impact of Greek literature, science, and philosophy immensely widened the outlook of Italians who gained access to this rich body of learning. While Byzantines seemed unable themselves to use the Greek legacy in novel ways, the Italians created with its help a new range of intellectual achievements that would continue for a long time.

III

Two contrasts with Byzantium that the study of the Italian Renaissance specially brings out deserve comment. One is the absence on the part of most Byzantines of an interest in knowing Latin, as opposed to the eagerness with which some of the leading Italian humanists of the fifteenth century used their newly-acquired Greek learning. The other contrast is the difference in the attitudes to historiography.

Planudes, in his willingness to translate important Latin poets and

⁹ Ullman, *Salutati* (1963), p. 118.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-25; Wilson, *op. cit.* (1992), pp. 8-11.

¹¹ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 11.

prose writers, was quite exceptional (chapter 12). Through their ignorance of Latin literature the Byzantines were unable to appreciate that the principal Latin poets and the leading writers on oratory, especially Cicero and Quintilian, were steeped in Greek literature. They could have learnt how much Greek culture had been appreciated and interpreted by an educated elite of Romans in the last century of the Republic and under the early Empire. In some cases Latin writers alone preserved parts of Greek literature no longer available to Byzantines: Italian Renaissance scholars were discovering that. For example, in 1489, Angelo Poliziano in his *First Miscellanea* was able to reconstruct from a poem of Catullus a lost poem of Callimachus, the most refined of the Alexandrian Hellenistic poets.¹²

To come now to historiography. This was a field of literary scholarship where the Byzantines were much more restricted in their interests. Unlike the Italian humanists, who wanted to recover the glorious Roman past of ancient Italy, the Byzantines usually did not care to explore the history of antiquity. The Italians having discovered the profound gap between the culture of antiquity and the civilization of their own day, tried to trace in some detail how the changes had taken place. The Byzantines, lacking the concept of the Middle Ages, seldom tried to do this, and then only very superficially.

Petrarch was a pioneer in trying to write intelligently about some periods of Roman history. His most distinguished enterprise was a "Life of Caesar" which was one of his last works. He used in it only authentic sources directly connected with Caesar.¹³ For Italian humanists, history soon became one of the chief branches of humane studies. Thus Salutati drew up a list of Greek books which he wanted to procure in Byzantium for the new Greek course at the University of Florence. "Historians head the list".¹⁴

Below, we shall look at some of the Italian historically-minded achievements in the fifteenth century, noting especially the stimulus given by acquaintance with Greek. This was the origin of critical

¹² E. B. Fryde, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (Aberystwyth, 1996), vol. II, pp. 588–90, 607–8.

¹³ There is an excellent short account of Petrarch as historian by E. Kessler, "Petrarch's contribution to Renaissance historiography", *Res Publica Litterarum* I, (1978, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas), pp. 129–49. On the "Life of Caesar" see also G. Martelotti, *Scritti Petrarqueschi* (Padua, 1983), pp. 77–89, 424–25.

¹⁴ Wilson, *op. cit.* (1992), p. 8.

modern historiography. It will bring out the Byzantine failure to do anything comparable.

We have to start with the Byzantine historiographical record. First, an example of an important but traditional Byzantine scholar relying unquestioningly on ancient sources and consequently writing nonsense. John Argyropoulos had been an eminent teacher at Constantinople before becoming the professor of Greek at the university of Florence. In his lectures there in February 1456 on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* he described Aristotle as initially a pupil of Socrates and only later of Plato. Leonardo Bruni, the most brilliant of Salutati's former assistants, who had been conducting research on Aristotle's life in preparing to write his biography in Latin (in 1429–30), knew that this was impossible. In a letter to his friend Poggio he pointed out that Aristotle had not yet been born at the time of the execution of Socrates in 399 B.C.¹⁵

The history of Greek city states was incomprehensible to subjects of absolute Byzantine emperors, though they admired the pure Greek language and the style of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, who wrote about Greek history in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Probably from the 1440s we have a history of Greece after 362 B.C. (the end of a brief period of Theban supremacy) by Gemistos Plethon. He was a leading Byzantine scholar of his time, resident at Mistra, the capital of the virtually autonomous Byzantine despotate of Morea. He may have written it for his pupils.¹⁶ It is not a work of research but merely an unpretentious recital of the facts which could be found in his two main sources, Diodorus and Plutarch.¹⁷

The Italian humanists, naturally, were not interested in writing the history of Greek city-states. But the translations into Latin by Lorenzo Valla of Thucydides and Herodotus (1448–c. 1455) contained notes by him revealing acute researches on some details of Greek history.¹⁸ Italians were chiefly interested in using Greek narratives to fill gaps in the history of ancient Italy that were inadequately covered by Latin sources.¹⁹ One of Bruni's earliest historical

¹⁵ E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), p. 63 and n. 42.

¹⁶ C. M. Woodhouse, *Gemistos Plethon. The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 221–22.

¹⁷ N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), p. 270.

¹⁸ Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (1983), pp. 94–8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

publications was a Latin "Life of Cicero" (the *Cicero Novus* of 1415). It was an adaptation of Plutarch's Greek "Life of Cicero", but much superior to it, using a wider range of sources. These included for the first time the two collections of Cicero's letters owned by Salutati.²⁰

Roman history was largely inaccessible to Byzantines as very few of their intellectuals ever mastered Latin. The few competent scholars who had done so did not use it to translate Roman historians. In the third quarter of the fourteenth century Demetrios Kydones, and others who shared his determination to seek reconciliation with the Catholic West, only translated Catholic religious writers. George Scholarios, the leading Aristotelian teacher at Constantinople in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, translated more writings of St. Thomas Aquinas than Kydones had attempted.²¹

What might be an example of the Byzantine lack of interest in Roman history is provided by an incident from the learned activities of Cardinal Bessarion, the most distinguished of the Byzantines settled in Italy (between 1440 and 1472). He had in 1453 borrowed from Francesco Barbaro of Venice a manuscript of the later *Annales et Historiae* of Tacitus, and had it copied. His marginal notes in this copy suggest that of the events of the third quarter of the first century A.D. only those connected with Jewish and Christian topics and happenings in Palestine interested him.²² Admittedly, his lack of obvious concern with anything else might have some other explanation.

As for Greek writers on Roman history, only Polybius (2nd century B.C.) was a historian of the highest quality. The work of his two distinguished continuators Poseidonios and Strabo was already lost in antiquity, though Strabo's *Geography* contained much information derived from those two histories and Planudes may have helped to preserve it (chapter 12).

The few Byzantine historians who incorporated in their writings the histories of Rome written in Greek, usually followed a single narrative. The purpose of such unusual excursions into Roman history might be polemical. Thus John Zonaras, writing his *Epitome Historion* possibly in the middle of the twelfth century, used the early books of the *History* of Dio Cassius (a senator of Greek descent, d.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 2, pp. 33–52. On Bruni's study of Cicero's letters see p. 43.

²¹ E. B. Fryde, *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (1996), vol. II, pp. 624–27.

²² Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (1983), pp. 98–99 and n. 94.

after 230 A.D.). They covered the story of the Roman Republic. Zonaras learnt from Dio the distinction between the republic, existing for the preservation of its citizens, and the Byzantine Empire which in his day was governed as if it were the property of its ruler (section VI of chapter 3).

The two most important Italian historical enterprises between 1415 and 1444 were works by Bruni and by Flavio Biondo. Bruni wrote a *History of the Florentine People* from the origins of Florence to 1402. Biondo, writing in 1439–44, composed a history of Italy and of the role of the Papacy in the Christian West from the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 to the early 1440s. Both intelligently combined a variety of sources, Bruni using the Greek ones particularly well.²³

This kind of historical writing, trying to rewrite ancient history or to narrate the history of the entire Middle Ages, was largely lacking in Byzantium. Byzantines wrote some very valuable contemporary histories, including as backgrounds the immediately preceding periods. For polemical purposes, as part of religious controversies, they were capable of producing excellent monographs. In the 1270s John Bekkos, patriarch of Constantinople, reconstructed quite correctly the story of the conflicts, in the ninth century, between Patriarch Photios and a succession of popes and thereby buried a venerable myth about a prolonged schism (chapter 15). But they showed very little interest in rewriting distant ancient history for purely scholarly reasons.

A highly developed sense of history is clearly in evidence when a scholar tries to recover a vanished civilization in its entirety through a 'systematic' collection of all the relics of the past.²⁴

A systematic arrangement by topics, as opposed to chronologically arranged narratives, was the distinctive feature of this type of scholarship. Plato called it *archaiologia*.²⁵ Hellenistic Alexandria became in

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6, 8, 20–21. For Bruni as a historian see especially B. L. Ullman, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (2nd ed., Rome, 1973), pp. 321–43. For Biondo see A. Nogara, *Scritti Inediti e Rari di Biondo Flavio* (Città del Vaticano, *Studi e Testi*, no. 48, 1927); D. Hay, "Flavio Biondo and the Middle Ages", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 45 (1959); R. Fubini, "Biondo Flavio", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 10 (1968).

²⁴ A. Momigliano, "Ancient history and the antiquarian", *Studies in Historiography* (London, 1966), p. 5.

²⁵ A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley-Oxford, 1990), p. 60.

the third century B.C. a particularly important centre of such 'antiquarian' research, based on a wide variety of evidence. One of the main reasons for its development was the prominence at Alexandria of the production of the standard editions of the principal Greek writers and the compiling of commentaries on them.²⁶ The great Roman scholar, Varro (d. 27 B.C.), a friend of Cicero, applied to Roman civilization this Hellenistic inheritance, translating *archaiologia* as *antiquitates* (our 'antiquities').²⁷ His many publications included twenty-five books of human (Roman) antiquities and sixteen of religious antiquities and exhibited "a consistency, a strength and a fullness of results that over-shadowed all his predecessors".²⁸ Some of his writings were rediscovered in the middle of the fourteenth century by Italians belonging to the circle of Petrarch's friends.²⁹ Much evidence derived from Varro was preserved by St Augustine and other Latin writers.

Of course the Byzantines knew nothing of Varro. They had inherited a good deal of the information assembled by Alexandrian scholars, chiefly as *scholia* to literary texts. They themselves cited much of it piecemeal in the annotations to their own editions of the ancient writers or in commentaries on them. But no Byzantine tried to compile a systematic collection, arranged by topics, of such 'antiquarian' information.

"The ancient erudite research as a discipline on its own" was remarkably called back to life by the Italian humanists of the fifteenth century. This was, above all, the achievement of Biondo who "deliberately tried to revive Varro's *Antiquitates*". "The result . . . became the prototype of all later antiquarian research on ancient Rome." His last work, *Roma Triumphans* (1456–60) contains a systematic survey of the public and private institutions of the ancient Romans. Though a high papal official, and a devout Catholic, he even attempted a scholarly account of Roman pagan cults.³⁰

²⁶ The fullest account is in R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁸ Momigliano, *Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (1990), pp. 66, 68–9.

²⁹ Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission* (1983), pp. 430–31.

³⁰ Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (1983), pp. 11–12; Momigliano, *Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (1990), p. 70.

Biondo was the forerunner of the systematic antiquarian handbooks, the founder of modern scientific research on the antiquities of all the countries of Europe.³¹

IV

The combination of inheriting both ancient Greek and Latin legacies gave the Italian humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth century the scope for wide and many-sided activities. The Byzantine scholars came to be much more restricted in what they regarded as their obvious tasks.

To return for the last time to the Italian historiography. The introduction into Italy in the early fifteenth century of the texts of the leading Greek historians consolidated the lessons that the Italians could draw from the ancient Latin writers. It would make them appreciate more strongly the choice of definite, clearly delimited subjects and a more coherent arrangement of their materials. It would sharpen their grasp of the nature of historical evidence and of what constituted a convincing proof. They could learn better how a historian reconstructed a reasonable chain of causes.

The intellectual horizons of the Italian humanists were widened by their contact with Greek civilization in all its aspects. The two Italian humanists of genius active in the fifteenth century were Lorenzo Valla (1407–57) and Angelo Poliziano (1454–94). Valla, in Augustin Renaudet's words, was the earliest modern exponent of "systematic doubt".³² His Greek scholarship was one of the foundations of his exercise of critical judgement in the many fields of humane learning that concerned him, the study of the Bible and church history, law, philosophy, historiography and the translation of Greek historians and, above all, classical languages. Poliziano was the first Italian humanist whose Greek scholarship was as accomplished as that of his most distinguished Byzantine contemporaries. His expert exercise of Latin and Greek philology was destined to illuminate the entire field of classical culture and of the Italian learning and literature which had their roots there.³³

³¹ Momigliano, *ibid.*, p. 71.

³² In his *Humanisme et Renaissance* (Geneva, 1958), p. 101.

³³ I document some aspects of Politian's scholarly achievements in the last chapter of my *Greek Manuscripts in the Private Library of the Medici, 1469–1510* (1996), vol. II, pp. 710–32.

In a discussion in his seminar the late Arnaldo Momigliano, in commenting on the history of the Renaissance, identified two main phases in it. First there was a long period of slow evolution of Latin studies, not very decisive. Then came a mutation, a radical and irreversible change, brought about by the coming into Italy of scholarly Greek learning followed by the importation of the bulk of the riches of Greek literature. Byzantine intellectual life never had the benefit of a comparable mutation.

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